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New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo . . . . (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 10 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/56/1 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

Mr. Pradham (Bhutan): My delegation congratulates the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, on his report (A/56/1) to this session of the General Assembly on the work of the Organization. We found the report to be comprehensive in covering the activities of the Organization during the course of the last year. The report brings to the fore and emphasizes the principles of the Charter and the international laws, treaties and conventions that guide, or at least should guide, the work of the Organization and, more particularly, its Member States. It is a frank report that brings forth the issues on which the international community has yet to take adequate action or make sufficient progress.

Above all, the report clearly bears the stamp of an active, principled, concerned, knowledgeable and capable Secretary-General.

The Government and the people of Bhutan came forward and, without reservation, endorsed the re-election of Mr. Kofi Annan for a second term of office. It was therefore a joyful occasion for us when Member States confirmed his appointment for a second term on 29 June this year. As we once again extend our warm congratulations to him, we wish him all success in the arduous tasks that lie ahead for the United Nations.

In that context, especially in view of the recent events here in New York City, the home of the United Nations, and in Washington, D.C., the capital of our host country, the foremost issue on all our minds at this point in time is terrorism. As you informed us, Mr. President, we will be discussing this matter under agenda item 166 on 1 October.

We are obviously concerned with terrorist acts and their implications for human security, especially in view of the dimensions that terrorism has come to acquire as a violent weapon to achieve objectives, as a heinous tool that knows no limits and as a crime against humanity that does not differentiate between military and civilian targets and personnel, men and women, children and adults. The dimensions and scope of terrorism are growing by the day with serious implications for international peace and security.

In the Secretary-General's report, in paragraph 224, under the heading "Legal affairs", he has informed us that the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings entered into force on 23 May 2001. This is a welcome development. We are also aware that the United Nations efforts thus far have been to create a legal framework and that work on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism has already commenced. This is something that we will now have to expedite.

The need is obviously felt for the United Nations to get more involved in mustering international cooperation and to take appropriate steps to prevent the rising tide of terrorism. In view of this, my delegation

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suggests that the Secretary-General's report, in the future, contain in greater detail, and perhaps under a separate section, information for the General Assembly on the efforts of the Organization to curb terrorism.

The Secretary-General's report demonstrates the vast responsibilities that the United Nations has had to take upon itself in the interests and for the benefit of humankind and the planet. While there is a tremendous amount of diversity that makes up our universal membership, what is most essential to guide all our activities are the principles of the Charter, even as we adapt to an ever-changing international environment. The Secretary-General has called upon Member States to match their rhetoric with action. We support his efforts to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to one of prevention. We endorse the idea that preventing the recurrence of conflict should be the central priority of the United Nations, and that this would be the most desirable and cost-effective strategy to ensure lasting peace.

But these laudable goals cannot move forward without the political and principled support of Member States. Our efforts must therefore continue to be aimed towards eliminating weapons of mass destruction, the trafficking in small arms, the banning of landmines, providing more effective and greater humanitarian assistance, ensuring that children are not made into soldiers and do not suffer in armed conflicts and eliminating the gross mistreatment of women in some parts of the world. And then there is the clear need for the United Nations to enhance its peacekeeping role and capacity.

While progress in some of these areas is clearly visible, especially the diminishing production and use of landmines, we cannot let up in our efforts, as much still remains to be done. The United Nations role has to be consistent and unfailing in maintaining peace and enhancing the security of all parts of the world without exception. To us here at the United Nations, the Secretary-General's annual report is an important tool for keeping track of the work of the Organization.

The Secretary-General's report also serves as important advice and guidance to Member States and in effect outlines what is expected of them as responsible members of the world community. In this regard, the Secretary-General has reiterated,

> "development cooperation is a solid foundation on which to build stability, economic justice and social development". (*A/56/1, para.8*)

This statement is a significant guideline and is crucial for the tasks that lie ahead of us. The poverty in the developing world is becoming unbearably severe, especially with the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. The statistics on poverty and its prevalence are well known to the international community. Hence, there is no need for me to reiterate them under this agenda item. Civil and international conflicts have destabilized societies and have increased human suffering. Social and economic development and the battle against HIV/AIDS need the commitment, strong political will and conviction of Member States in order to make progress on these vital issues. In fact, the recently concluded high-level dialogue on strengthening economic cooperation dealt with the question of making globalization inclusive and beneficial to developing countries, and especially the least developed among them.

In conclusion, I would like to state that my delegation is happy with the report of the Secretary-General. We are confident in his leadership and will extend our support and cooperation in all his endeavours.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): As I take the floor for the first time during the fifty-sixth session, I extend to you, Sir, my congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly. My delegation looks forward to working with you to address the many important tasks ahead of us and is confident that we shall achieve them under your guidance and leadership.

Before I proceed to address the agenda item before us, I wish to reiterate, in the General Assembly framework, to the delegation of the United States the heartfelt condolences of the Irish delegation and of the Government and the people of Ireland for the horrendous attacks inflicted on our host country and city. This Assembly will have an opportunity, shortly, to address the very real threat and scourge of terrorism under a separate agenda item, but none of us here can stand at this podium and not denounce these attacks — attacks not only on the United States, but on all the world's right-thinking people. As European heads of Government meeting in an extraordinary European Council stated last Friday, the attacks of 11 September were a challenge to the conscience of each human being. We condemn them utterly.

I would like to commend the Secretary-General for his wide-ranging report on the work of the Organization contained in document A/56/1. In his introduction, he notes that the United Nations activities in the past year have been conducted against a background of suffering caused by violent conflicts across the world. One year on from the Millennium Summit, this Assembly must address these conflicts with a new resolve, born of the realization that we cannot separate international peace and security from issues of poverty and underdevelopment. These, in turn, often produce economic and social tensions which, left to smoulder, can ignite larger and potentially destabilizing conflagrations.

The events of 11 September have demonstrated all the more that the entire international community must seek with renewed vigour to resolve various long-standing disputes around the world, disputes on which terrorism feeds. As we confront those who exploit these disputes for their own twisted purposes, we must take urgent action to resolve the root causes and work together to achieve a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. Work to implement the Millennium Summit development goals must remain a key priority for the international community.

I welcome, therefore, the attention which the Secretary-General has paid in his report this year to issues of conflict prevention, peace-building and peacekeeping and the protection of civilians. He notes the increased attention devoted by the Security Council to the prevention of armed conflict and its growing interest in the protection of civilians. As the Secretary-General rightly points out, it is, unfortunately, a feature of modern conflicts that the main brunt falls on innocent civilians rather than on conventional armies. As a member of the Security Council, Ireland has a policy to continue to engage vigorously on these very important issues.

We welcome and strongly support continued efforts to improve early-warning systems through inter-disciplinary fact-finding and confidence-building missions to volatile areas, through regional prevention strategies and through reports to the Security Council on disputes that have the potential for destabilization.

We look forward to the finalization of the practical guide for the United Nations system on support by Headquarters to field staff in the formulation and implementation of coherent peace-building strategies. This sort of backstopping from the centre is essential if the United Nations on the ground is to do its job effectively and be able to learn from previous experiences.

We also welcome the attention being paid to improving coordination between humanitarian action and peace operations, and efforts to adopt a more holistic approach generally. Many conflict situations are extremely complex and require integrated responses. We are grateful that more attention is now being given to remedying gaps identified in the provision of humanitarian assistance to internally displaced populations, which are often less visible within their own borders.

The review conducted by the Secretary-General of the state of the world's affairs presents a very mixed picture, and the overall balance sheet is still disturbing. We share his disappointment at setbacks in a number of areas of conflict. Progress is being registered in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and concerned countries in the region. However, fragility and uncertainty persists in these areas, and there are continuing difficulties in the implementation of established agreements and frameworks.

The Middle East has proved even more intractable over the past year, although we believe there is now a wider recognition all round of the essential ingredients that must underpin the peace process than there was earlier this year. We must all build on that. Ireland, through its membership in the Security Council, will continue to search for lasting solutions to these and other disputes.

There are also, however, some tangible signs of progress. One example is East Timor, where the United Nations is playing a vital role in its evolution from a post-conflict situation towards independence. We agree with the Secretary-General that the extensive efforts of the international community should not be undermined by an early downsizing of support. A substantial international presence, including civilian, military and police components, will be necessary after independence. We further agree that such a presence should be mandated by the Security Council and funded from assessed contributions. For its part, Ireland is already committed to continuing its support.

We believe, despite recent acts of violence by UNITA directed against the civilian population, that the overall situation in Angola is moving in the right direction. Last week in the Security Council, we heard the Angolan Government's clear recognition of the successes of the United Nations sanctions regime, together with the Government's commitment to open elections and urgent work in the humanitarian, health, education and human rights areas in cooperation with the international community.

The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has been doing good work leading up to Kosovo-wide elections in November. We agree fully with the Secretary-General that Kosovo Serbs must be encouraged to participate fully in the election process and supported in that respect. The task of UNMIK extends beyond the elections and the Secretary-General points to the many crucial challenges which it still must meet in trying to build a new and equitable society.

We continue to follow closely the implementation within the Secretariat of the recommendations of the Brahimi report on peacekeeping, and we appreciate the responses given by the Secretary-General to requests from Member States for greater detail in some areas. I would like to assure him of our continued support for measures aimed at building the United Nations peacekeeping capacity. The Secretary-General rightly makes the point that there is a need for further assistance in building up the capacity of Africa to undertake peacekeeping operations. We look forward to further action on this during the coming year.

The Secretary-General points to the need to deepen cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations in strengthening United Nations peace-building activities in the wider effort to prevent conflict. This worked well in Haiti, where there was good cooperation between the Organization of American States and the United Nations, and we fully support the further enhancement of such mutually reinforcing links. As a member of the European Union, Ireland also welcomes the steps to strengthen cooperation between the Union and the United Nations in the area of crisis management.

International peace and security are indivisible and, because of this, we share the unease with which the Secretary-General regards the current uncertainties in the area of disarmament, particularly the weakening of the commitment to existing bilateral and multilateral arms-control agreements. Surely recent events strengthen, rather than diminish, the need for renewed commitment to multilateral negotiations towards legally binding, irreversible and verifiable disarmament agreements across the range of immensely destructive weapons in existence today.

In the area of conventional weapons, there is no question that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a significant contributing factor in many modern conflicts. If our response is to have any chance of success, the problem has to be addressed in a comprehensive and integrated way. The July 2001 Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was both the culmination of a long preparatory process and the launching pad for what we hope will be a dynamic follow-up process. The Conference was a significant, but first, step. Ireland will assume its responsibilities in working actively and cooperatively with other Member States to implement the Programme of Action. We support early, integrated action to this end.

In the Millennium Declaration, we pledged collectively to make the right to development a reality for everyone and to meet the special needs of Africa. The Secretary-General rightly focuses an important chapter of his report on cooperating for development. He points to some highly important developments over the past year, in particular the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which took place in May, and the special session on HIV/AIDS, which took place in June, as well as preparations for the crucial International Conference on Financing for Development, scheduled to take place early next year. If we are to remain faithful to and fulfil the promise of the Millennium Declaration, it will be essential to work together and to put words into action.

The Secretary-General has now issued his road map for implementation of the Declaration. It is a quality document, and we commend the Secretary-General for it. The road map provides the international community with a comprehensive and coherent approach to the achievement of the millennium development goals. We must work together to ensure that progress towards these goals is accelerated.

The United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) *Human Development Report* for 2001 makes clear that only a limited number of countries are on track to meet, by 2015, the goal of reducing by half the number of people living in extreme poverty. The achievement of this goal is fundamental to our efforts to ensure that globalization works for the benefit of all peoples in all countries. The road map will serve as an important benchmark against which to measure progress.

Ireland welcomes the establishment of the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force. The Task Force will play an important role in elaborating policies, providing advice on strategies and best practice, and mobilizing international efforts to bridge the digital divide.

We welcome the attention which has been given over the past year to strengthening the management of the United Nations and to accountability and oversight, as well as to more rigorous follow-up in ensuring that recommendations to address deficiencies are implemented.

Finally, in welcoming the Secretary-General's annual report on the work of the Organization, I would like to point to ways in which it could be still further improved. I would encourage implementation of two specific points identified in General Assembly resolution 51/241. These were, first, the inclusion of a forward-looking section containing specific goals for the Organization; and, secondly, the addition of an annex giving information on costs of programmes and activities. Both of these would be useful tools for the Secretariat in ongoing efforts to improve accountability and oversight, and they would also help Member States assess the extent to which mandates have been fulfilled.

Mr. Seixas da Costa (Portugal): Belgium will be taking the floor later today on behalf of the European Union. Portugal, of course, fully subscribes to that statement.

As this is Portugal's first formal intervention in this plenary meeting, let me start by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of this very demanding session of the General Assembly. My delegation and I will strive to be as helpful as possible in supporting your efforts to make this session a success.

This session is taking place at a unique and difficult time for the international community and during a period of grief for us all, for the host country of the United Nations and for all of the countries that lost citizens in this tragedy, including my own.

Portugal thanks the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization and commends him and all his staff in the Secretariat and in other parts of the United Nations for the efforts undertaken this year in implementing the agenda of the Organization. My delegation is especially pleased that Mr. Kofi Annan will continue serving as Secretary-General for a second term, giving us the benefit of his leadership and experience in these particularly trying times.

The terrorist attacks of 11 September present a grave challenge to the United Nations — a challenge which can best be faced by enhancing even further international cooperation in all fields and at all levels. Let us not forget that it is the United Nations that represents the highest and most universal expression of this international cooperation, and that it is, therefore, the United Nations that must remain at the core of all international efforts.

Security, in all its aspects, is clearly our main concern. How can our people feel safe in their homes? But how can we ensure also that they have homes to feel safe in? How can we help to bring conflicts to an end, and how can we prevent them from beginning? How can countries help themselves develop, and how can others help them do so? How can we secure the rule of law and protect human rights? Above all, how can we help those most in need?

The issues touched upon by the Secretary-General in his report — peace and security, humanitarian assistance, development, human rights and international law — all of these matters, in and of themselves and where they intersect, come together as a whole to provide the greatest challenges to the United Nations as well as the very purpose of its existence.

This is made abundantly clear in the preamble to the Charter of this Organization. Those powerful words ring as true today as they did when they were first declared more than half a century ago, and they set out clearly what is necessary for us, the United Nations, to continue to strive for.

First, we are striving for peace and security. Through the reform of the United Nations peacekeeping support structures and his report on conflict prevention, the Secretary-General is addressing fundamental needs in order to ensure that the United Nations has the capacity to meet the challenges posed by armed conflict. Work must proceed towards meeting organizational and resource requirements, to permit the effective planning, deployment and management of concurrent United Nations peacekeeping operations in different parts of the world. Particularly important is meeting the timelines established for rapid deployment. The recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations will be crucial to these efforts, and Portugal urges the approval of the necessary resources by the relevant bodies.

The recommendations contained in the report on conflict prevention are being taken up by all of the organs and agencies involved, and we look forward to their comprehensive and coordinated consideration in order to translate them into concrete measures.

The Secretariat's peace-building plan of action will also be of great importance as we increasingly recognize the need for coherent strategies for peace which run the gamut of activities from prevention to peacekeeping to peacebuilding and back to prevention once again. The Secretary-General is right when he writes of the need for a more effective capacity for situation analysis. This will lead to a more responsive and more effective United Nations.

The problem posed by the dangerous proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, such as biological and chemical weapons, cries out for continued international efforts at cooperation in the area of disarmament. It is imperative that these efforts proceed.

The struggle against the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons also represents an example of the kind of coordinated international action that is needed to address the challenges that face us all.

Secondly, we are striving to provide humanitarian assistance to those in need. Natural disasters and conflicts and their toll on our peoples around the world are uppermost in our mind; before anything else, we must try to save lives in immediate danger. United Nations humanitarian action must continue to receive the greatest attention from our Governments to ensure that the capacity is there to address the increasingly complex situations that pose such a challenge to us today.

Coordination, both at Headquarters and in the field, is critical to strengthen this capacity, thereby ensuring that all humanitarian actors are able to use their strengths and particular expertise, avoid any duplication of efforts and be most effective in the provision of assistance.

The plight of displaced persons — both within and across borders — continues, deservedly, to receive the attention of the United Nations. Portugal welcomes the Secretary-General's decision to strengthen the United Nations capacity to deal with internally displaced people, giving due importance to their need for protection and for improvements in their situation.

Access to the populations in need is, of course, crucial to the provision of humanitarian assistance. This cannot be stressed enough. Access should be unhindered and in conditions of safety and security, both for the humanitarian workers and for the victims.

Thirdly, the United Nations is striving for development. Poverty is a dire threat to human security, and the war declared on poverty by the Millennium Summit must continue. Poverty, social exclusion and inequality lead to tensions and conflicts and provide fertile ground for extremism, fanaticism and other violent forms of political expression.

In the globalization of the world's economies, we must be acutely aware of potential negative effects, and globalization must be given a human face so that its benefits are distributed as widely as possible. Globalization must be a collective process of growth and progress, seeking to include and not to exclude, to construct and not to destroy, to develop and not to impoverish. A regulated process of globalization, based on free and fair trade, can have a decisive influence in spreading the benefits of growth and contributing to the alleviation of social imbalances and ethnic tensions, as well as the cyclical crises that affect societies on the edge of development.

The HIV/AIDS catastrophe must also continue to be high on our agenda. The death and suffering caused by this terrible disease are tearing countries apart, particularly in Africa. This alarming situation needs the concerted action of the international community. Portugal fully supports these efforts and commends the Secretary-General for his particular commitment to this critical struggle.

Finally, we are striving for human rights and international law. As the Secretary-General points out, reports to the Commission on Human Rights paint

> "a bleak picture of the status of human rights in the world today". (*A/56/1, para. 196*)

We must continue to strive for universal respect for human rights. The United Nations and its human rights treaties provide the framework for the protection of the rights of individuals, particularly those most vulnerable.

Portugal supports the important work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, whose Office should be provided with the necessary financial and human resources to respond to the crisis situations it faces on a daily basis. Voluntary contributions to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights are, of course, important, but it is the regular budget of the United Nations that must ensure the provision of such resources and so avoid disruptive fluctuations in the level of financing.

Finally, I turn to international law, which the Secretary-General rightly considers the sine qua non of a world of order and justice. Strengthening respect for the rule of law in international affairs is a crucial task for the Organization, and we welcome the efforts of the Secretariat in this regard. The ratification of treaties, codifying the commitments undertaken by Member States for international cooperation, and the growth of international law in general are critical to this process, as is the work of the ad hoc international tribunals and of the International Criminal Court in ensuring that there will be no impunity for war crimes or other violations of international humanitarian law. The Rome Statute has indeed opened a new chapter in international law, and we fully subscribe to the Secretary-General's appeal to Member States to establish their consent to be bound by the Statute and to support the important cause of the Court.

I have addressed the four broad areas of the United Nations activities covered in the Secretary-General's report. Of course, I could not be exhaustive in my comments, and many issues I did not mention equally deserve attention from the United Nations. What I wish to stress here today is the importance of concerted, international cooperation in meeting all of these challenges. Thus can we continue to strive to accomplish the aims set out in the preamble to the Charter of these United Nations.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, may I congratulate you on your election to preside over our work. We are certain that under your leadership the General Assembly will be successful in its work.

I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his important report on the work of the Organization. The report outlines a broad and objective view of the United Nations efforts in its various fields of action.

However, the report reveals another essential aspect of the Organization: the pivotal role of our Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, whose leadership has been essential in the institutional reform of the United Nations so that it may carry out its important duties in the contemporary world. At this critical moment for the international community, his moral stature grows still greater.

The General Assembly will have the opportunity to discuss the issue of terrorism in plenary meetings. However, I cannot fail to mention the challenge that that scourge represents for the Organization and for all of us. The expressions of solidarity over the loss of lives in the United States should be translated into a broad coalition in the name of tolerance and with the purpose of combating the underground networks of terror.

As the Secretary-General has indicated, the United Nations is the proper forum for this purpose and can ensure the global legitimacy of a long-term response to this threat. Terrorism is an enemy that, in order to attain its hateful objectives, makes destructive use of the instruments that characterize globalization: means of transportation, the instantaneous nature of modern communications, and the speed of financial transactions.

It is impossible to fight terrorism without the cooperation of all States. This is a task that, by its very nature, requires the resolute support of all, without exception. The Security Council must act with determination, in accordance to its mandate, in order to avoid a repetition of tragedies such as that which struck the world on 11 September.

Returning to the report of the Secretary-General, I would say that the same determination is necessary to find lasting solutions to the various conflicts that afflict the world, especially on the African continent and in the Middle East. We must be obsessive about finding solutions to these conflicts.

Despite the continuation of armed conflicts in various regions, East Timor stands out as a paradigmatic example of the ability of the United Nations to transform a situation when it comes to promoting peace. We must build upon that base, and we therefore hope that the Member States will continue to support the people of East Timor so that the progress made can be consolidated and extended.

Also in the area of peace and international security, we agree with the Secretary-General that the Brahimi report represents an important contribution to improving the performance of peace operations.

However, we are concerned that the reports of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians in armed conflict and on conflict prevention are not receiving the same level of attention from Member States. The recommendations in those reports deserve careful analysis and action as soon as possible.

Equally important in promoting a stable world order is the affirmation of the international rule of law. We agree with the Secretary-General's evaluation of the deterrent effect the International Criminal Court will have in preventing massive violations of humanitarian law and human rights. The implementation of the International Criminal Court will be a positive step towards a more humane world order.

Another no less important issue is that of our need to redouble international efforts to mitigate the corrosive effects that extreme poverty and lack of opportunities have upon peace-building in the world.

The Millennium Summit set out fundamental objectives for eradicating poverty and promoting development. Member States pledged to reduce by half the number of persons living on less than $1 per day by 2015. The problem continues to be how to achieve that objective. The Secretary-General's "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration" (A/56/326) is an important step in that direction. The road map proposes a set of indicators that will make it possible for the international community to follow and evaluate the progress achieved towards the goals of development and sustainable development, including in the area of the commitments undertaken by developed countries.

There are no recipes applicable to every situation, but we know that there can be no development or eradication of poverty without access to markets for the exports of developing countries and without predictable and sustainable financial flows to support the implementation of public policies. In order to eradicate poverty a more favourable international environment must be combined with a national commitment to ensure that individuals are at the centre of the development process. In addition, international cooperation for development should support efforts to establish more just and egalitarian societies and more transparent and democratic political systems.

The International Conference on Financing for Development to be held in 2002 will be an opportunity to establish innovative mechanisms in that area. We attach high priority to the conference as part of the efforts to achieve the goals established at the Millennium Summit. For my country, which served as the host for the historic United Nations Conference on Environment and Development — held in Rio de Janeiro — the assessment of progress and new challenges in the implementation of Agenda 21 remains crucial. The year 2002 will therefore require great effort to make progress in the practical implementation of the concept of sustainable development. This, in turn, will demand determination and political will to confront such problems as unsustainable patterns of production and consumption.

This is a period in which we are seeking answers to help us understand how the terrible attacks of 11 September could happen. In addition to specific and immediate measures against terrorism, the work of the Organization as a whole can help prevent the recurrence of similar tragedies. If we are effective in the field of disarmament — including in the areas of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and small arms — and if we overcome the risk of unilateral solutions, we can create a safer international environment and avoid catastrophic scenarios such as the hypothetical mix of terrorism with weapons of mass destruction. If we promote development, combat discrimination, increase respect for human rights and succeed in making the United Nations an effective tool for the prevention and resolution of conflict, it will be more difficult to exploit feelings of despair and political and social exclusion to manipulate and exacerbate extremist hatred.

At a time when all of humankind is confronting a challenge of colossal proportions, the United Nations is more necessary than ever to create a horizon of harmony and prosperity for all peoples. In other words, we must together build globalization imbued with solidarity. The United Nations is undoubtedly the best instrument for that purpose.

Mr. Sychov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): My delegation would like to extend its thanks to the Secretary-General for introducing his report on the work of the Organization. As in previous years, our delegation regards the report as a solid foundation for a thorough analysis of the work of the United Nations in the past year and for defining the main areas and priorities for the future.

The fact that the Secretary-General has been elected to a second term, even before the end of his first term, is symbolically important as we consider his report. We wish Mr. Kofi Annan success in this new difficult stage of the United Nations development and are ready to offer him our full support and cooperation in his work.

The first year of this new century has shown the entire world community the full scale and scope of existing problems. The acts of terrorism that shook the world on 11 September of this year clearly illustrate the need for concrete global response to global challenges. We think that this is the perspective from which we should look at the work of the United Nations today. Belarus joined the States of the world in their strong condemnation of the unprecedented acts of terrorism against major cities of the United States. The President and Government of Belarus immediately conveyed their sympathies and condolences to the American people on their pain, which has now become the pain of the world community.

We welcome the proposal for an immediate and comprehensive discussion on the problems of combating terrorism, which is to begin in the General Assembly next week. Belarus will actively participate in working out collective initiatives to counter this most heinous contemporary global phenomenon. Only the collective machinery at the disposal of the United Nations system can help us to find a comprehensive response to this challenge and to prevent its future repetition.

Globalization has recently been the subject of theoretical and scientific research. But today globalization has become part of people's daily lives. In this connection, we welcome the focus of the United Nations on practical results in this area. The Declaration adopted at the Millennium Summit established the reliable foundation for moving ahead in directions assigned priority by the international community. Development is the point of departure here, a priority that we indeed believe is the only real of way of ensuring further progress by the Member States of the United Nations in the era of globalization.

We share the Secretary-General's approach and his desire to look at development as an integrated whole. The realities of the world today show that economics, the environment, finance and natural resources are all increasingly interrelated and impact directly on the maintenance of international peace and security and conflict prevention and management. In this connection it is appropriate to stress the need for a comprehensive and consistent strategy for conflict prevention. Discussing the recommendations submitted by the Secretary-General last July is very productive. In essence we need to focus the work of the Organization on prevention and on alerting everyone to hotbeds of instability, for ignoring them, as we have unfortunately seen, would have consequences that cannot be remedied.

We must continue to strengthen peacekeeping and peace-building machinery. The decisions and recommendations of the General Assembly and the Security Council with regard to the recommendations of the Brahimi report should be implemented. In this connection, we will soon sign a memorandum of understanding with the Secretariat on participation in stand-by arrangements and are ready to make our contribution to this work.

The Secretary-General's report contains many references to various aspects of the situation in Africa. Africa has for a long time been a focus of United Nations attention; but we are now for the first time seeing some indication of improvement and stabilization. This includes prospects for significant progress in Ethiopia and Eritrea, Burundi, Somalia and some positive trends in Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We think it is very important for all bodies in the United Nations system — and primarily the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council — not to lose momentum, but to continue to actively support and assist African States to overcome their many problems.

We cannot confine ourselves to discussing this issue and calling for action. Today, in order to resolve the truly difficult problems, we must also exploit the potential of regional organizations. In this context, we are convinced that the African Union must become a reliable partner of the United Nations.

One source of problems in guaranteeing international peace and security is the very unsettling situation in the Middle East. Belarus is convinced that there is no alternative to establishing an independent Palestinian State through political negotiations based on strict respect for the Security Council's resolutions and the decisions of other international forums. This is the only way to ensure respect for the inalienable right of the Palestinians to self-determination and to guarantee Israel's security interests. It is regrettable that the Security Council was unable last year to achieve consensus on a possible United Nations presence in the region during these difficult times.

As a State of Europe, Belarus shares the concern expressed in the Secretary-General's report over the ongoing instability in the Balkans. The crisis in that region has truly widened and there are continuing ethnic divisions and the threat of territorial war. We believe that the Security Council must focus more on analysing and determining how to solve the problem. The international community must lead the peacekeeping efforts in the region in order to avoid any further serious outbreak of war.

Considerable attention is devoted to disarmament in the report on the work of the Organization. The past year clearly showed that there are many outstanding and urgent problems in this respect. The statistics on global military budgets are alarming and the Secretary-General affirms that further active efforts are needed. Belarus is resolved to taking such steps. In 2000, we deposited instruments of ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In February this year, medium- and short-range missiles inspections were completed on our territory, putting our country in full compliance with all the provisions of the Treaty. Our adherence to a responsible export control policy is reflected in the fact that we joined the Nuclear Suppliers Group in 2000.

Belarus welcomes the Secretary-General's assessment in his report of the threat posed by the deployment of national missile defence systems, which would have a negative impact not only on existing bilateral and multilateral arms control agreements, but also on current and future disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. In our sincere opinion, the realities of today's world confirm the great importance of this issue. The establishment of new weapons systems cannot overshadow contemporary priorities focused on creating a climate conducive to sustainable development.

In developing ideas on the interrelationship between security and development in this century, our delegation welcomes the intensive work being done this year to prepare for the International Conference on Financing for Development. We feel that that forum must establish an entirely new international consensus on global economic and financial problems related to development. Belarus believes that a consensus must be built that takes account of the specific interests and needs of countries at different stages of economic and social development. The message of the President of the Republic of Belarus, Alyaksandr Lukashenka, to the Secretary-General clearly set forth our support for the Secretary-General's recommendations on the need for the direct and paramount participation of the Governments of all interested countries, along with representatives of the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society. The success of the Monterey Conference will in turn be very important to our moving ahead in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa in 2002.

In the context of preparations for that meeting, we cannot fail to stress the need to address the consequences of man-made disasters. In the context of this year's sorrowful fifteenth anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster, it is all the more evident that this problem is also related to ensuring sustainable development, primarily in the affected territories, and requires the full attention of the international community. We are convinced that the United Nations will keep this in mind as it prepares its future strategy on coping with the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

As we analyse the Secretary-General's report and compare it to past reports in the light of recent events, we are all aware today of the need for unity in the actions of the international community to achieve a future of dignity. It is again clear that the United Nations can and must be the effective source of such unity. Achieving it will not be easy, but it is possible.

The Government of the Republic of Belarus is willing to work with all other Member States to that end.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom is profoundly grateful to the Secretary-General for his latest report on the work of the United Nations. It is, as always, a thoughtful reflection on the work of the Organization and on the way ahead. Together with the Millennium Declaration issued by heads of State and Government in September 2000 and with the road map for the implementation of that Declaration, it sets clear signposts for the year and years ahead.

Since 11 September, we have all realized that we have another — and, in the short to medium term, overwhelming — priority: to deal with the scourge of terrorism. The attacks on the United States did not merely do grave injury to our host city, our host country and its citizens, and to the citizens of nearly 80 other States. As the Secretary-General said yesterday, they struck at everything for which the United Nations stands: peace, freedom, tolerance, human rights and the very idea of a united human family.

The United Kingdom shares the horror and the profound grief caused by these atrocities. The British list of the missing itself runs into the hundreds. When it is clear who is responsible for those actions and who has supported, protected or abetted those responsible, the United Kingdom will contribute to bringing them to account.

But, collectively, the membership of the United Nations has to do more than that. The United Nations set a structure in place for the period from 1945 onwards to prevent the return of global conflict. In that, the Organization has been successful. But the structures which we have in place — political, military and legal — have been primarily focused to deal with the main threat of the past period, that of war between States. Our challenge now is to make sure that we have structures to deal with the present and future threats we face, of which the threat of terrorism is now the most immediate. We cannot afford to make the mistake that was committed between the two World Wars of the twentieth century: to imagine that our adversaries share the same values, basic rules and assumptions about how human beings, even in conflict and war, should behave towards one another. We have to acknowledge that the people who plotted, organized and carried out these attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania on 11 September were not people who accept any of the rules or values that the vast majority of people in the world would recognize.

That is why the United Kingdom Government, from the Prime Minister downwards, have stated so clearly in public and in private that this is not a clash of institutions or religions, and particularly not an argument with Islam. As a further example of our getting our priorities right, the United Kingdom has, since 11 September, allocated considerable further funding to the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

The United Kingdom will be contributing, together with our partners in the European Union, to the debate on terrorism which will start in the General Assembly on 1 October. We must transform our traditional methods of diplomacy to bring some good out of this evil. On the one hand, we must not be deflected from our attempts to resolve conflicts, defuse tensions and build peace in the troubled regions of the world, whether this be the Middle East, the Balkans, Africa or elsewhere. The terrorists will want all those efforts to fail. But we now have another urgent duty: to ensure that no one, whether States or individuals, harbours, supports, finances or encourages terrorism. The international community must unite as never before to take determined, collective action against the threat that terrorism and its supporters pose to global security. We will support action both in the Security Council and in the General Assembly to achieve those joint and comprehensive objectives.

Terrorism is ultimately self-defeating. We Member States, collectively, have to channel the rage and revulsion which we feel into effective decisions to ensure the triumph of the civilized values for which the Charter of the United Nations stands. In setting ourselves that aim and acting upon it in unison, the United Nations will emerge an even stronger Organization.

But we cannot allow our determination to combat terrorism to divert us from action to meet the other global challenges which confront us. I want to highlight some of the global issues on which we have to concentrate in the months ahead.

The battle against poverty must remain at the heart of our collective effort. The financing-for-development process will be the principal forum for our debate on this issue until the Conference in Monterrey in March next year. We have set ourselves clear, global development goals at United Nations conferences and at the Millennium Summit. Financing for development gives us the opportunity to find the resources to meet those goals: national and international, public and private.

Monterrey must rise above the all too familiar Second Committee squabbles about who is responsible for the unsatisfactory results so far in addressing the needs of developing countries. The fact is that we are all responsible. At the extreme ends of the spectrum, it may be selfishness, callousness or incompetence that is getting in the way. For most of us, however, it means that we have so far failed to establish a common purpose which overrides our political or philosophical differences. At Monterrey we have to develop a programme for collective action which is more effective in addressing the problems of the developing world than any previous efforts. The European Union will be contributing strongly to that end, as the Belgian Presidency will make clear in this debate later today.

Beyond Monterrey, we have set ourselves the task of looking at the broader picture of sustainable development at the Johannesburg Summit next autumn. We have to face up to the fact that we have not got it right since Rio. We have not met the challenges of building sustainable development on the foundations of economic performance, social strength and protection of the environment. This time we must ensure that we get each of these equally important pillars in place and bearing the right load.

2002 will also ask us to maintain our promise to the world's children and ensure that the special session on children takes forward materially the protection of their rights and their well-being. Can we really yet say that we have given children the priority they deserve, over and above the competing priorities of national politics? It is time to deliver for the next generation. And let us not forget the world's older persons, who look to the World Assembly on Ageing next April for real results.

As important as the new agenda is, we still have to keep our promises inherited from the old one. The United Nations peacekeeping and conflict-prevention capacities must be enhanced, along the lines of the Brahimi report. Effective follow-up to the General Assembly's special session on AIDS must also be a priority. The agendas from Beijing, including pushing forward the cause of the gender mainstreaming of our work here in New York, and from Copenhagen and Istanbul, all remain on the table. It is a mark against the international community that we still have work to do to consolidate human rights as the foundation for our global programme of human advancement.

In no continent is it more important that we pull together these difficult and demanding agendas than in Africa. We have focused our rhetoric on Africa for too long without achieving the dramatic changes that are necessary. Now Africans have themselves responded in establishing the New African Initiative. The United Kingdom applauds them for taking their responsibilities seriously and working on the programmes that are flowing as a result. The United Kingdom Government, at the highest level, is taking a detailed interest in the progress of the New African Initiative and will contribute materially to it. Programmes based on partnership, which will itself ensure a comprehensive approach, must guide the United Nations response, across the different organs and agencies of the Organization. And those organs and agencies must themselves find a way of acting corporately and cooperatively, moving beyond the anachronistic inhibitions which still haunt our corridors.

It is time that we all recognized that, to meet the demanding targets we have set ourselves, the involvement of Governments alone is not enough. Success in all these endeavours will need the United Nations to develop its partnerships with civil society, whose voice must be heard in our debates. The energy of the private sector, in all its many manifestations, also has to be captured. The Secretary-General's Global Compact is gaining support, and with that support can generate significant results. Ordinary people must understand the relevance of the United Nations, because our work only matters if it makes a difference to them. In other words, our work in New York must become less narrow and more responsive to the real needs of a rapidly changing world.

I have confidence that under your leadership, Mr. President, and in the light of the consistent and forward-looking guidance offered to us by our Secretary-General, this Assembly will take our whole agenda forward with vigour and practical efficiency.

Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. van den Berg (Netherlands): This afternoon, Belgium will make a statement on behalf of the European Union to which the Netherlands fully subscribes. But I wish to make a few remarks on the national level.

The attacks on the United States on 11 September have changed our lives, our work and our goals. We are saddened and angered. The international community and the United Nations as an organization have rallied together to condemn and combat the scourge of international terrorism. We also have to reflect and refocus on what we deem important as human beings and as a global community. Looking back at the past year of the United Nations would somehow appear marginal if we did not consider at the same time the work of the Organization in the light of the horrific and uprooting events of two weeks ago.

But first and foremost, I should like to emphasize the profound admiration the Government of the Netherlands has for the huge and varied work done by the United Nations. That goes for the United Nations system as a whole, but certainly also for all the achievements of United Nations Headquarters in New York. Considering the relatively limited financial and human resources of the Organization, the United Nations manages to get a tremendous amount of work done, especially in the field of cross-border problems such as combating HIV/AIDS, poverty eradication, global climate issues, refugee problems and, last but not least, terrorism.

Indisputable as it is, the huge workload of the United Nations will inevitably be affected by the need to contemplate the agenda for the near future. As the Secretary-General has reminded us, we need to address the conditions that permit the growth of hatred and depravity. We thus need to look at root causes, such as conflict, disease, poverty and ignorance. We have to remove the conditions that may create a breeding ground for the insanity of terrorism. The dramatic events of 11 September have demonstrated the need to address those global issues. The United Nations should take the lead and can make a real difference. And we believe that the United Nations can make a difference, not only when it comes to combating cross-border terrorism, but also in those other fields where individual Governments need overarching direction and the support of the international community. There is an immediate urge to address in an operational and result-oriented way, for the world at large, the issues of safety, security and the international rule of law. Let me therefore highlight a few issues that the United Nations, given the obvious linkages, needs to address as a matter of urgency.

The first is enhancing the rule of law. Eliminating the scourge of terrorism requires a broad and global coalition. The 12 United Nations conventions against terrorism must come into full effect, and they be must be enforced. All nations that have not done so yet should therefore sign and ratify all United Nations conventions against terrorism, including the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

As another step in the war against terrorism, we want the International Criminal Court to be established without further delay. Impunity for crimes against humanity is unacceptable. Those who are guilty of crimes against humanity should be individually held accountable, and the community of States should bring them to justice. During the upcoming preparatory meeting for the International Criminal Court here in New York, the Netherlands will maintain its commitment to that goal by pursuing the necessary arrangements for the establishment of the Court.

Let me now make a few remarks on development. When it comes to eliminating the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and stability, the United Nations has to play its part. The Millennium Declaration helped to create a sense of urgency, and the present debate provides an occasion for the international community to take stock of our joint efforts, and to deliberate on and provide guidelines for the future course of action. In our view, the international community has to step up those efforts. That is why the Netherlands strongly urges all developed countries to adhere to the international target of devoting 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product to official development assistance.

But we need to do more, and we need to do better. Poverty and other threats to durable peace and security can be effectively addressed only as a common endeavour of the States in the United Nations system. In that regard, the International Conference on Financing for Development will be a first test.

By doing that we will set the goals of the United Nations as an organization higher. The input of the Secretariat in our decision-making process will be challenged by our increasing demand to come to grips with the true overarching global phenomena we face. Yet, as a percentage of world gross domestic product, we spend only 0.0000-something per cent — in short, a negligible amount of world gross domestic product — on the Organization's Secretariat, funds, programmes and specialized agencies. I simply ask: is that really sufficient? Let us reflect on that question.

With the new agenda taking shape on the basis of the goals set by the Millennium Declaration and the report (A/55/305) of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations chaired by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, I should like to assure the Assembly that the Government of the Netherlands stands ready to play an active role and expects other delegations to do likewise. Member States have to be innovative, forward-looking and not unduly bothered by too-detailed management of the Organization. The Netherlands, for one, has total confidence in the way the Secretary-General, as chief executive officer, manages the Organization, thus freeing us Member States from cumbersome micro-management and enabling us to focus on broader lines of policy.

The present state of the world gives us a chance to bring the United Nations to its full potential. Let us not fail in that endeavour.

Mr. Zackheos (Cyprus): I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to Mr. Han Seung-soo on his election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. I would like also to convey my appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for the determined and effective leadership with which he guided the work of the fifty-fifth session and for his efforts to rationalize and improve the functioning of the General Assembly.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Cyprus, I reiterate our deep condolences, solidarity and sympathy to the Government and the people of the United States in connection with the tragic loss of innocent lives and of property caused by the abhorrent terrorist acts of 11 September. We strongly condemn those barbaric acts, which we consider to have been attacks against humanity. Our sympathy goes also to the families of the nationals of many countries who perished or are missing following that senseless crime. The assault may have been harsh and extremely painful, but it has not broken our spirit or weakened our determination to stand together in the struggle for the preservation of the fundamental principles of civilization.

I would like to join previous speakers in expressing appreciation to Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan for his lucid and thought-provoking report. His recommendations, if implemented faithfully, would contribute greatly towards achieving the goals for which the United Nations was created. I would furthermore like to extend warm congratulations on his well-deserved re-election to the post of Secretary-General and pledge Cyprus' support to his efforts and initiatives that have substantially elevated the prestige of our Organization.

My head of State will address all the important items included in the report during the general debate. I will therefore, with your indulgence, limit my remarks to the situation in Cyprus, which is covered in paragraph 39 of the report. In this paragraph, the Secretary-General describes briefly his efforts at resuming the talks, under his auspices, following the withdrawal from the negotiations by the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr. Denktash, with the full backing of the Turkish political and military leadership in November of last year. The Secretary-General mentions his efforts at encouraging Mr. Denktash to return to the negotiations and his meeting with him last month in Salzburg.

Following that meeting, the Special Advisor of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alvaro de Soto, embarked on a mission in Cyprus from 28 August to 5 September 2001. On 5 September, he extended, on behalf of the Secretary-General, official invitations to President Clerides and Mr. Denktash to come to New York on 12 September to resume negotiations. President Clerides immediately accepted the invitation and stated his readiness to come to New York. Mr. Denktash, however, in another outburst of his well-known intransigence, rejected it, which caused great disappointment and generated public statements of disapproval from many States, the European Union, as well as Turkish Cypriot political parties and Turkish personalities.

Ignoring the call by the United Nations that the time has come to engage in an intense period of work so that it would be possible to report progress on issues of substance before the end of the year, the Turkish Cypriot leader, with the support of Ankara, continues to this day to insist on placing preconditions before he returns to the negotiations, preconditions that are contrary to Security Council resolutions, in particular 541 (1983), 550 (1984) and 1250 (1999).

Despite the fact that the Secretary-General of the United Nations has publicly expressed the view that the ground for the resumption of the talks had long been prepared, Mr. Denktash this time finds another way to procrastinate by attempting to exploit and deliberately misinterpret the statement of the Secretary-General of 12 September of last year and calls for continuing contacts for finding common ground and for the creation of a new partnership. In essence, he has embarked on yet another attempt at presenting his proposal for a confederation of two equal sovereign States in Cyprus.

The Turkish side tries to justify this unacceptable position, which is contrary to Security Council resolutions and the two high-level Agreements of 1977 and 1979 that bear Mr. Denktash's own signature, by the need, as they call it, to accept the so-called realities on the ground. These realities, as they say, are the separation of the two communities and the existence of religious and ethnic differences between them. The Turkish side, however, deliberately chooses to ignore that the separation of the two communities was a direct consequence of Turkey's partitionist designs against Cyprus and her invasion and subsequent occupation of 37 per cent of Cypriot territory.

As to their second argument, may I remind Members that at a time when both Cyprus and Turkey are candidates for accession to the European Union, where emphasis is placed on tolerance and multiculturalism, the attempt to present differences in religion and ethnicity as the raison d'être of creating two different States in Cyprus is at least suspect and grossly anachronistic.

As is well known, the international community has repeatedly rejected this policy. The plethora of United Nations resolutions provides ample proof of that. Acceptance of the so-called realities on the ground would create a very dangerous precedent in international affairs, striking at the very heart of the cherished principles of State sovereignty, territorial integrity and international law.

The reality of the situation in Cyprus, as has been repeatedly recognized by the international community, is as follows. First, there is the presence of 36,000 Turkish occupation troops; secondly, there have been massive human rights violations by Turkey and its subordinate local administration in the occupied area, as confirmed by the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, in the Loizidou vs. Turkey case and the more recent decision on the Fourth State Recourse by Cyprus against Turkey; thirdly, there is the repression of our Turkish Cypriot compatriots by a regime that brands everyone objecting to its policies as traitors and has already forced one third of the Turkish Cypriot community into emigration.

Fourthly, there is a deliberate policy to alter the demographic character of the island through the illegal implantation of Turkish mainland settlers in the occupied area; and last but not least, there have been numerous lost opportunities for Cyprus and all its people, particularly the Turkish Cypriot community, stemming from the forced division of the island.

In conclusion, despite our disappointment at the lack of political will and the many obstacles on the road to peace placed by the Turkish side, the Government of Cyprus and President Clerides will continue to display a constructive approach and the necessary political will for the resolution of the Cyprus problem, a solution that would usher in a new era of peace, prosperity and security for all Cypriots, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots alike.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): This year, as we address ourselves to the Secretary-General's annual report, we should be performing more than just a ritual. It is a different year that we look at in retrospect. The Millennium year, the first of the twenty-first century, as it will be remembered in history, started with a renewed commitment of the United Nations membership at the highest level to the timeless and universal purposes and principles of the Charter. Our leaders adopted the historic Millennium Declaration last year as a blueprint of their vision for the twenty-first century.

It is not a time for clichés and the same old complimentary or critical comments on the Secretary-General's report. I think this comprehensive, focused and action-oriented report has been overtaken by events. The Secretary-General has himself added a postscript to his own report. We all read the other day his op-ed article in *The New York Times*, which could be made a new chapter of his report as an adjunct. He defines, in the wake of what we all saw with horror and shock in this city and in the city of Washington, a new challenge to humanity and the need for a global response. Terrorism is a universal evil with tentacles in all societies, irrespective of religion, ethnicity and even the level of affluence or development.

The events of 11 September certainly came as a wake-up call, not to any one country or any one society, but to humanity as a whole. Consequently, humanity now has to respond to this challenge — this universal evil. Our response must not be based on retribution alone, nor on emotion or anger. It must be guided by wisdom and an understanding of the facts, and motivated by the need to remedy the disease by addressing its root causes.

Terrorism lurks in the shadows and the wilderness. It breeds on disillusionment, suspicion, fear and hopelessness. It is fed by ignorance and poverty. It is exploited by hatred, bigotry, resentment and the perceived invasion of cultures. The roots of terrorism lie in the inequity of societies, in the despair of slums and in the bewilderment of the human soul. This is a problem that has to be dealt with in a long-term manner. It needs a new, measured, sustained and holistic approach, which aims at rooting out the injustice and oppression that lie at the heart of this phenomenon.

The Secretary-General rightly said in his article in *The New York Times* that the United Nations, as a representative body of humanity, is uniquely placed to mobilize a concerted and continued response to the challenge that is before us. Let us hold each other's hands. Let us not turn our backs on each other. Let us strengthen each other. Let us respect each other and each other's culture and value systems. Let us enable this world body to play its role under the Charter in preventing conflict and resolving disputes. Let us persevere, as the Secretary-General has said, in creating a stronger, more just, more benevolent and more genuine international community.

We in Pakistan abhor and condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including State terrorism. We agree with the Secretary-General that the United Nations provides the forum and global legitimacy for a universal response against terrorism. Pakistan has pledged its full and unstinting support in the fight against international terrorism. This is a pledge rooted in our abiding commitment to the principles for which my country stands. In the past, when the world was polarized by two ideologies, we deliberately chose the side that stood for freedom and justice. Today, we again stand on the side of right, and we are still upholding the flag of freedom, tolerance and justice.

In the light of the changed situation, my comments on the Secretary-General's report will have to be selective and focused. Indeed, we are today at a crossroads, facing yet another defining moment. The last century was full of many defining moments. We saw great upheavals, in the form of economic disaster and great wars, during the first half of the twentieth century. The United Nations itself was born out of these upheavals so as to provide a moral edifice for the reordering of the global system. In the perennial struggle that characterizes the history of mankind, the United Nations was created to uphold what is good and combat what is evil.

Multilateral cooperation was to be the norm for resolving all global problems. The United Nations, which we have termed mankind's "last best hope", was to chart the way to a new and better world — a world free of violence, injustice and oppression. The United Nations also signified the dawn of decolonization, as the age of colonial and racial powers had run its course. In those early decades — the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s — the peoples of Kashmir, Palestine, South Africa, Namibia and scores of other regions won legitimacy, as well as political and moral endorsement, for their just causes. Unfortunately, the world today is still experiencing violence, injustice and oppression. The struggle of those who remain deprived of their legitimate, inalienable rights continues.

We note in the Secretary-General's report the reference to both Kashmir and Palestine. They are two of the longest unresolved disputes of our time. We agree with his assessment, in paragraph 29 of the report, that

> "The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians can be resolved only through a political settlement."

We also agree with his observation that the tragic loss of life has underlined the urgency of reaching a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict on the basis of Security Council resolutions. His observations on Palestine are equally valid for Kashmir, where thousands of innocent lives have also been lost, necessitating an early solution of the problem in accordance with the resolutions of the Security Council.

We are happy that the Secretary-General was able to visit South Asia in March this year and lent his support for the resumption of bilateral dialogue between Pakistan and India. The dialogue was, indeed, resumed later in the year.

We hope that the Secretary-General and the international community will continue to encourage this dialogue with a view to enabling it to reach a meaningful, logical and honourable conclusion — that is, a final settlement of the Kashmir issue in accordance with Security Council resolutions and in conformity with the legitimate wishes and aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Pakistan, for its part, remains fully committed to sustaining a purposeful and results-oriented dialogue with India with a view to finding a just and equitable settlement of the core dispute of Kashmir and addressing all other outstanding issues.

We seek durable peace with India. Both of our countries need to free themselves from the legacy of the last century and begin a new relationship that focuses on the socio-economic well-being of our peoples.

Another conflict which has eluded resolution for over two decades is the one in Afghanistan. Today it is the focus of the world community, in a tragic context. As the international community responds to the current crisis, it must also address the grave humanitarian situation in that country through reconstruction and reconciliation. We welcome the Secretary-General's offer in his report that the United Nations is prepared to assist

> "in the political, developmental and humanitarian fields in order to address the root causes of instability" *(A/56/1, para. 33)*.

Pakistan has for more than two decades borne the burden of millions of Afghan refugees. We continue to host the world's largest refugee population, which reached a peak figure of 4.5 million in the 1980s, while international assistance has continued to progressively decline. As rightly pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report, this year alone 200,000 Afghans have left their homes due to the protracted conflict and the acute drought conditions and sought shelter in Pakistan. With the situation unfolding before us, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is of the view that at least 1.5 million, if not more, Afghan refugees may enter Pakistan. Just imagine the magnitude of this crisis. We are already burdened with 2.5 million refugees and are facing the prospect of another 1.5 million arriving in Pakistan.

How the international community copes with the impending humanitarian crisis will be a real test, not only of its ability but also of its moral responsibility. We appreciate the personal interest that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Ruud Lubbers, is taking in this emerging humanitarian crisis, and we particularly appreciate the efforts that he has been making in recent weeks by contacting all of the donor countries, visiting different capitals and meeting all concerned people here at United Nations Headquarters.

We note with satisfaction that one area in which the United Nations has begun to improve its performance in the last year is that of peacekeeping. It is in no small measure a tribute to the determination of this Organization and of the world community to work effectively towards a common goal. Pakistan, as a leading troop-contributing country, has also played its due role both here at United Nations Headquarters and in the field. We, as ever, remain committed to supporting this Organization in its efforts to maintain international peace and security. We are encouraged by the Secretary-General's interest in conflict prevention and peacemaking, and we urge him to broaden the scope of his efforts and that of the Organization to cover those areas which have thus far not received due attention from the international community — conflict prevention, dispute resolution and peacemaking as well as peace-building.

Another area that deserves greater attention from the international community is the eradication of poverty. At the Millennium Summit, our leaders resolved to wage war on poverty by launching a sustained campaign to make the right to development a reality for everyone. We need concrete steps to achieve this goal, and everyone accepts that the responsibility for the realization of this goal lies both with the countries and the international community — at the national level and the global level.

We agree with the Secretary-General that if the international community is to meet its goals of development and poverty eradication, economic growth in developing countries must accelerate. To this end, we are currently pursuing the financing for development process in a holistic manner, with the participation of all major stakeholders, including the Bretton Woods Institutions and the World Trade Organization. This process cannot produce miracles, but it is worth making a collective effort to create, on the basis of consensus, an enabling environment for socio-economic growth.

While we must do more, as the Secretary-General says, to render globalization inclusive and equitable for the international community, this daunting task has acquired added importance and urgency in light of the new grim reality we face today. The world community and this Organization must therefore think long and hard about its priorities and about the ways it deals with those parts of the world or those societies which have missed out on the benefits of our times. Thus, in the context of globalization, it becomes all the more necessary and urgent that the United Nations seriously review its policies and programmes to deal with the new challenge, which has unfortunately redefined this new century. We must therefore respond appropriately and review our policies. The conditions in which we live have been changed forever; let us hope that the best that is in our humanity has not.

The founding fathers of this Organization had a vision. They envisioned a future in which succeeding generations would live in peace and prosperity, a world order based on our faith in fundamental human rights, socio-economic equity, the rule of international law, the dignity of human beings and justice. Let us reaffirm those ideals and rededicate ourselves to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): Since this is the first time Denmark has taken the floor after the horrific events here in the United States on 11 September, I would like to offer my condolences to the United States, the American people and the families and friends of the innocent victims. Denmark most strongly condemns the forces behind this terrible act. The Danish Government and the Danish people stand by the United States both now and in the months to come. We are fully committed to the international efforts to ensure that those responsible for these acts of terrorism are brought to justice and punishment.

Having said this, I would like to congratulate the President and the Bureau of the General Assembly upon their election. They have gained very important positions at a time when strengthened international cooperation is called for more than ever. The recent catastrophic events in the United States have reminded us of the urgent need to act.

Terrorism is today the single most serious international threat to democracy and the rule of law, and thus to the functioning of our societies. It is essential that all countries redouble and unite their efforts in the fight against terrorism.

At an extraordinary meeting in the European Council last week, the European heads of State and Government called for the broadest possible global coalition against terrorism within the United Nations framework. They reaffirmed their belief that the United Nations, with its unique and universal mandate, is a fundamental player in the fight against terrorism and must act accordingly.

Firm and resolute action has already been demonstrated by the Security Council and the General Assembly; this was done the day after the attacks. It is our hope that this General Assembly will take concrete steps that could lead to a strengthening of international cooperation in combating international terrorism.

But we must go beyond that. We must ensure strengthened international cooperation in a wide range of areas. Only by reiterating our joint efforts will we prevail. We must show the world that we have the political will to act. Otherwise, we reduce ourselves to a redundant talking club that cannot be taken seriously.

The report of the Secretary-General reminds us of the complexity of the challenges we face. The report also illustrates that the United Nations can be instrumental in international cooperation to meet those challenges, and that it demands further political and financial support from all countries, as well as from the international donor community and domestic resources.

Denmark is fully committed to meeting the challenges. We devote more than 1 per cent of our gross domestic product to official development assistance, and we actively participate in United Nations deliberations and actions — not least the United Nations peacekeeping operations.

But not only Member States need to strengthen their effort. Enhancement of the effectiveness and efficiency of the United Nations as an organization is also a prerequisite for success.

The reform process initiated by the Secretary-General has already shown positive results. A stronger focus and coordination of United Nations activities and programmes lead to greater impact. But further work needs to be done at all levels in order for the United Nations to function according to its potential.

Denmark also welcomes the efforts to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to one of prevention. We are pleased to note in the report that the peace-building and conflict prevention activities have been strengthened across the system, especially at field level.

Peace and security are fundamental conditions for economic, social and environmentally sustainable development. This has become ever more obvious during the last decade. Thus this year the Danish Government, in a reformulation of our development policy, decided to further strengthen our efforts to prevent conflicts.

As stressed in the report, we have to focus on Africa to support the growing will of African States and regional organizations to enhance their conflict-prevention capabilities.

Denmark has from the very outset been a major contributor to United Nations peacekeeping, both in terms of funds and soldiers. Unfortunately, the basis for the success of United Nations peacekeeping missions has not always been in place. This has caused United Nations failures in the field and severe suffering for many people. We must enhance the Organization's peacekeeping capabilities, including its capacity to deploy peacekeeping operations rapidly. Also the ability to provide humanitarian assistance to the millions that suffer as a consequence of conflicts all over the world is an integral part of establishing and maintaining peace and security.

The report of the Secretary-General underlines that the reality of the distressed civilian population has not changed significantly and that there are serious gaps in the United Nations humanitarian response to the needs of the millions of internally displaced persons. To complicate things, there are still widespread attacks on humanitarian workers.

These matters need to be addressed. The protection of civilians, humanitarian workers and United Nations personnel in armed conflict is first and foremost the responsibility of the host State. But an enhanced international effort is also called for and, not least, better coordination between all actors: local governments, civil society and the international community.

The Secretary-General speaks of critical link between peace, security and conflict prevention, on the one hand, and development and respect for all human rights on the other. This point cannot be stressed enough. The interlinkage is unquestionable. Both sides of the problem need to be addressed.

With a focus on the eradication of poverty, domestic and international commitments must go hand in hand in order to obtain the proper balance for development in all countries.

We fully agree with the statement made by the Secretary-General yesterday about the importance of trade for development, and we share his hope that the upcoming World Trade Organization meeting in Doha will result in the launching of a development-trade round. Furthermore, Denmark looks forward to engaging in the preparations for the Conference on Financing for Development and the Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg.

The Secretary-General in his report has once again highlighted the HIV/AIDS pandemic's global proportions and its devastating effect on development, not least in Africa. The outcome document from the special session on HIV/AIDS is a comprehensive basis for the fight against the pandemic, a fight that must always remain at the top of the international agenda.

Another cornerstone in the mandate of the United Nations is universal recognition of and respect for human rights. The report states that some progress was made during the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights, but that

> "the task of achieving universal respect for human rights remains daunting". (*A/56/1, para. 197*)

The Danish Government welcomes the increased international acceptance of human rights mechanisms and adherence to crucial human rights conventions and protocols. But too many examples of individuals suffering from human rights violations remind us that a better implementation of universal rights is urgently called for.

Respect for human rights is fundamental to ensure future global, regional and national stability and social cohesion. The well-being of all people must be put at the forefront of all efforts. In this respect, I would like to draw attention to the decision mentioned in the report to establish the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Denmark looks forward to the Forum's first annual session, to be held in May 2002, and would like to underline that thorough preparation and the allocation of the necessary resources for the session are imperative.

The environment in which the United Nations is to function has changed with the recent tragic terrorist attacks here in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania. The world has become smaller. All over the world people have followed the events and have expressed their grief, despair and disbelief.

Let us together use this session of the General Assembly to define the role of the United Nations in this new environment. The Secretary-General stresses in his report that the strength of the United Nations is its capacity to adapt to changing international conditions. Let us prove that. We must make sure that the United Nations, with its broad-based and universally accepted mandate, keeps its central position in international cooperation. We can make it.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization is dated 6 September 2001, five days before the fateful events of 11 September 2001, which will significantly change the course of world history and, consequently, that of the United Nations as well. Yesterday morning, when he introduced his report to the Assembly, the Secretary-General provided a thoughtful response to the events of 11 September. We support his views.

It is of course far too early to assess the impact of those events on the United Nations. But clearly one distinct possibility is that the international responsibilities of the United Nations may once again increase. The question will then be whether the United Nations is ready to take on those additional burdens. It may be useful to have that question at the back of our minds as we assess the health of the United Nations in reviewing the annual report card that the Secretary-General submits to the board of directors of the Organization, by which I mean the members of the General Assembly.

It may also be useful at this stage to review the lessons of the past decade. The moment that the United Nations faces now is similar to the one it experienced at the end of the cold war. The unfreezing of the old order led to a burst of promising events. The Security Council, which had been paralysed for much of the cold war, came together to solve many persistent conflicts. The united Gulf War coalition was another positive result. Peacekeeping activities flourished. But, as we all know, that promising start did not last. By the middle of the 1990s the United Nations again encountered significant failures, from Rwanda to Srebrenica. Once again, the United Nations became marginalized. The question is whether the next decade will see a repetition of that pattern.

In looking at long-term challenges facing the United Nations, we may find that one useful complement to the annual report is *Imagining Tomorrow*, published by the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations on the eve of the Millennium Summit last year, which contains a series of essays looking at long-term questions.

The annual report card before us today provides a good insight into the strengths, and some insights into the weaknesses, of the Organization. The report is well written, concise and analytical. The report also describes many of the bold initiatives that the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, has launched. Those have helped to improve the prestige and standing of the United Nations. Clearly, the leadership of Mr. Kofi Annan has made a significant difference. We are delighted that he has agreed to serve five more years. Both the United Nations and the world need his calm and quiet leadership, especially at difficult moments like the one we face now.

Unfortunately, one thing that the Secretary-General cannot do is to report on the performance of the board of directors, namely, the General Assembly. That is a pity. The Secretariat is just one member of the United Nations family. But the reputation of the United Nations is also determined by the performance of other members. Take our General Assembly, for example. We have had our share of ups and downs in the past year. The high point was the Millennium Summit last year. But all the subsequent special sessions and conferences appear to have run into trouble. The international media, as we all know, was particularly critical of the World Conference against Racism. As *The Washington Post* said,

> "The more the United Nations members allow the organization's name to be associated with the kind of posturing that went on in Durban, the more they stoke anti-UN feeling in key industrial nations."

It is therefore possible that some of the legislative processes within the United Nations have become dysfunctional. But that, as we all also know, is too complex a question to be addressed in this debate.

Similarly, the Security Council is another equally important member of the United Nations family. Here, fortunately, the General Assembly will have an opportunity to assess the Council's record over the past year, when it reviews the annual report of the Council on 4 October. The Secretary-General's report says:

> "For the United Nations, the concept of conflict prevention must be put into practice, and the rhetoric matched by action." (*A/56/1, para. 20*)

But only the Security Council has the power and authority to effectively engage in conflict prevention. The events of the past year show that the record of the Security Council, as it has been in previous years, remains a mixed one. Clearly, decisive Council intervention in Sierra Leone prevented a disastrous situation from emerging. However, the record in the Great Lakes region continues to be troubling. Even today, as we speak, the lessons of Rwanda are clearly not being applied to Burundi. We hope that next Thursday, when the General Assembly reviews the record of the Security Council, we will have an open and full debate on what we believe to be one of the most important issues facing the General Assembly this year.

The Secretary-General's report has an important section on peacekeeping and peace-building. Here, too, the decisions on where to deploy, how much to deploy and with what resources, are made not by the Secretariat, but by the Security Council. Some of those decisions are hard to understand. For example, why does the international community send over 45,000 troops and spend billions on a small province in Europe called Kosovo while sending less than 10 per cent of that number to a country that is almost as large as Western Europe: the Democratic Republic of the Congo? Even within Africa, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) has an authorized force of 20,000, while other conflicts receive scant or no attention. Are the needs of Burundi, for example, any less pressing? Perhaps a persuasive case can be made for each peacekeeping decision taken by the Security Council, but a persuasive case has not been made to the international community that the final result reflects an allocation of resources based on the overall needs of the globe rather than on the national interests of a few countries.

Fortunately, on the peacekeeping front there are also some heartening success stories. One such success story may be emerging in East Timor. Following the successful elections held in East Timor in August of this year, a Constituent Assembly has been established, and it will decide on East Timor's Constitution and future form of government. But, given the traumatic recent history, the situation will remain fragile. It is therefore encouraging to see that in paragraph 70 of his report, the Secretary-General has said:

> "substantial international support should continue to be provided, through an integrated and well-coordinated mission led by a Special Representative, mandated by the Security Council and funded from assessed contributions."

We hope that the Security Council will refer to this quote when it considers the future of the peacekeeping operation in East Timor.

I have made several remarks about peacekeeping, even though only 30 paragraphs in a report that has 271 paragraphs deal with that subject. The reasons for this are simple.

Firstly, the annual assessed regular budget of the United Nations stands at around $1.3 billion per year. But this year the peacekeeping budget will reach $3 billion. We demonstrate our priorities with the financial decisions that we make. Clearly, we give more priority to peacekeeping than to the regular work.

Secondly, only the United Nations has the authority to make payments to peacekeeping operations mandatory. In this area there is finally some good news. In paragraph 235 of his report, the Secretary-General says that the failure of a number of major contributors to pay their dues has forced the United Nations to borrow from peacekeeping accounts to offset the earlier and larger than usual deficit currently being experienced. Fortunately, if the news of today is correct, we believe that some major payments of outstanding assessments will be made. As the

Secretary-General has correctly emphasized, in paragraph 235:

> "It is clear that the United Nations cannot function effectively unless all Member States pay their dues, in full, on time and without conditions."

I think this is something that we should keep repeating at every possible occasion.

The emphasis that we have given to peace and security issues does not mean that we attach any less importance to the rest of the work of the Organization. The remaining five chapters of the Secretary-General's report, chapters II to VI, are equally important. The United Nations is doing even more important work in other areas. We will be touching on these issues as we address specific agenda items, for example, the special needs of the African continent.

But one key issue does need to be mentioned here: development. Clearly, chapter III should be the most important chapter of this whole report. If peacekeeping issues touch the lives of a few hundred million people on our planet, development issues are the concern of five billion people. The United Nations has made many significant commitments in this field, including the grand commitment made at last year's Millennium Summit to halve the number of people living in poverty by 2015. In paragraph 129, the Secretary-General says:

> "If the international community is to meet its goals of development and poverty eradication, economic growth in developing economies must accelerate."

Unfortunately for us, even as we speak here today, the global economic situation looks increasingly difficult, and it will probably remain difficult in the coming months. This will add to the many difficulties that will be faced by next year's International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico. We hope that in next year's report the Secretary-General will come up with bold and imaginative solutions to development issues, which should remain the most important item of the United Nations work.

Hopefully, as in the call that he made for effective conflict prevention, the Secretary-General will also issue a similar appeal to all Governments to match their rhetoric with action on development issues. Unfortunately, the record of the past two decades shows instead the reverse. We hope that future reports of the Secretary-General will attempt to address how this and other disturbing trends in multilateral processes can be reversed. This will make such annual reports even more valuable to the Member States.

Mr. Navarrete (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Two weeks after 11 September, two weeks after that day of infamy, my delegation wishes to reiterate its condemnation of the criminal acts that were perpetrated and which filled us all with horror and indignation. It also wishes to reiterate its unreserved readiness to contribute, unhesitatingly and resolutely, to international actions aimed at bringing to justice the authors, organizers and sponsors of these abominable acts, in fulfilment of resolutions 56/1 of the General Assembly and 1368 (2001) of the Security Council, to avoid further occurrences of these outrageous acts.

As the Foreign Minister of Mexico stated last Friday in Washington, at the special meeting of foreign ministers of the Organization of American States:

> "Mexico again expresses its condolences to and solidarity with the Government and people of the United States of America for the terrible losses caused by the terrorist acts committed on its soil. It expresses its firm support — within the legal order which governs all of our nations — to extirpate the root of the evil of terrorism and to strengthen peace and security in our region and the world."

Following the high-level dialogue on cooperation, this is the first occasion on which the delegation of Mexico takes the floor in the plenary of the fifty-sixth regular session of the General Assembly. Allow me, therefore, to express our satisfaction at seeing the distinguished Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea presiding over our deliberations. My delegation has every confidence that he will conduct this regular session — which, without doubt, has been transformed into an extraordinary session as a result of the adverse circumstances under which it has begun — with the good judgement, impartiality, intelligence and imagination that these circumstances require. I wish to extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau as well.

The President's distinguished predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Harri Holkeri — for whose highly successful stewardship my delegation is deeply appreciative — did his utmost to restore the work of the General Assembly to its rightful place among the various tasks of the Organization. By working to enhance the effectiveness of this principal organ — the most representative and democratic in the United Nations — he sought to underscore the importance that should be given to the debate in which we are now engaged — that is, the debate on item 10 of our agenda, the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization.

This is not a routine item. It is not a mere formality. In assessing the report that the Secretary-General has submitted for the consideration of the Member States on the work of the Organization, we have the opportunity not only to evaluate and appraise what has been accomplished, but also to plan our future course of action. This debate must therefore be thoughtful, detailed and profound. It must not be limited to a series of declarations. We must go beyond that.

In resolution 55/285, on improving the efficiency of the General Assembly, adopted a few weeks ago at the initiative of the President Holkeri and his facilitator, the Permanent Representative of Chile, Ambassador Juan Gabriel Valdés, the Assembly placed particular emphasis on the debate on the report of the Secretary-General. It suggested that consideration of the report by the plenary of the General Assembly might continue with a more detailed review of its main contents. The Mexican delegation believes that at this session of the General Assembly, which is beginning in the adverse circumstances that we all regret, a step can be taken in the right direction.

After we have listened to the statements in the plenary, informal meetings open to all interested delegations might be held to discuss in greater depth the key issues raised in the report of the Secretary-General, in an interactive dialogue, with the participation of the Secretary-General himself and senior Secretariat officials. Only in this way can we do justice to the important document that is before us. Only thus can our discussion of it lead us to useful conclusions to guide the work of the Organization through this difficult period that we now face as a result of the shocking events of 11 September.

Even as we look forward to an opportunity to review in greater depth the rich and thought-provoking contents of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, perhaps in the format that my delegation has suggested, permit me in this statement merely to highlight some of the issues that my delegation would like to see discussed in greater depth and detail.

One year has passed since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration. Mexico believes that the very credibility of the Organization depends on the effective follow-up of its timely implementation. One of the main tasks of the current session of the Assembly will be to consider and agree on a course of action to follow in this regard, based on the report of the Secretary-General on agenda item 29.

Of particular importance among the topics related to international peace and security is the culture of prevention, to which the Secretary-General referred in his important report on the prevention of armed conflict. Conflict prevention must undoubtedly become the centrepiece of the Organization's activities. Preventive measures must be comprehensive in their approach, involving the entire United Nations system and addressing all aspects related to the outbreak of conflicts. Emphasis must be placed on both conflict prevention and peace-building in order to prevent the recurrence of conflict.

Special importance must therefore be given to capacity-building within each country in areas such as the organization of free and impartial elections, the training of civilian police, the protection of human rights, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, and the strengthening of democratic institutions. The relationship between the United Nations and countries affected by conflict, through the Secretary-General, must therefore be strengthened, bearing in mind the negotiating capacity and political presence of the Organization, which can prevent the outbreak or the worsening of conflicts.

In addition, within the framework of a comprehensive strategy of prevention, the United Nations should concentrate its efforts on addressing, in a timely and effective manner, the root causes of conflict. No one can deny that poverty and social discontent unleash situations of instability that can lead to large-scale conflict. Our Organization must continue to lead the fight against poverty and to promote economic development so as to address the root causes of conflicts.

Sanctions are one of the mechanisms available to the Security Council under the Charter to restore international peace and security. We share the view of the Secretary-General that efforts must be made to ensure that sanctions do not unduly affect innocent populations or third States and that they are targeted at the real violators of international law. We urge the Council to continue to consider ways of achieving this important objective. My delegation considers that the Security Council is the only organ with the authority to impose sanctions and rejects unilateral measures as a means of political or economic coercion.

The Secretary-General stated in his report that a difference of opinion still exists as to priorities in the field of disarmament. Mexico is convinced that the international community must be guided by the priorities contained in the Final Document adopted at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. That document states that nuclear disarmament is the first priority. Mexico reiterates its commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons. It also reaffirms its support for the proposal of the Secretary-General, as reflected in the Millennium Declaration, to convene an international conference to identify ways of eliminating the danger of nuclear weapons. Now that the United Nations has considered the subject of small arms and light weapons at its Conference held this past summer, Member States should focus their attention on weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons because of the continuing threat they pose to humanity.

Mexico regrets the failure to reach agreement in the Programme of Action adopted by that Conference on such issues as the prohibition against civilian possession of small and light weapons and their transfer to non-State actors. Furthermore, my delegation regrets the inability to make progress in the negotiations on a protocol on verification to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. Mexico will work to ensure that the Fifth Review Conference of the Parties, which has been entrusted with the task of reviewing that Convention, takes the necessary decisions to continue those negotiations.

For Mexico, the protection of human rights is a universal value — an individual and collective obligation of States. We therefore agree with the Secretary-General about the need to bridge the gap that exists between human rights norms and their application. As a first step in the effort to bridge that gap, Mexico is determined to promote the application of international instruments in this field.

Today there are even more reasons to accord priority to the progressive development of international law and its codification. The efforts of the United Nations towards the establishment of the rule of law within and among nations represent one of the most important contributions that we can expect it to make in the new century.

The Government of Mexico has traditionally been an active participant in the efforts of the United Nations system in the area of international cooperation for development. In keeping with this tradition, Mexico will host, in Monterrey in March 2002, the International Conference on Financing for Development. It is my country's hope — this sentiment was eloquently expressed in the debate this morning by the representative of the United Kingdom — that the International Conference on Financing for Development will plot the course that must be followed if the commitments undertaken by our countries in the Millennium Declaration are to be fulfilled.

As the Secretary-General stated in his report, in this new century special importance must be attached to the strengthening of democracy in Africa and to the efforts of African States themselves to achieve lasting peace, eradicate poverty and attain sustainable development. African States themselves bear the main responsibility for seeking solutions to overcome the grave challenges they face — a responsibility that they are living up to through the adoption of economics recovery programmes and initiatives to pursue regional integration.

The New African Initiative is the most recent example of the efforts of African States to transform their continent. International support for Africa, however, remains indispensable. The international community must adopt special measures to alleviate the problem of external debt, improve access to markets, increase levels of official development assistance and augment the flow of foreign direct investment and technology transfers. The actions of the international community with regard to Africa must be governed by the principles, objectives and programmes contained in the New African Initiative. Mexico is prepared to provide support for and cooperate with those efforts.

Given the limitations of this already lengthy statement, it will not be possible for me to refer in detail to various other important issues dealt with in the report of the Secretary-General. I would therefore like to conclude by expressing Mexico's satisfaction at the re-election of the Secretary-General for a second term, as unanimously agreed on 29 June. My country would like to congratulate Mr. Kofi Annan and take this opportunity to reaffirm its steadfast commitment to cooperate with him throughout the period of his second mandate, during which, as he has stated in paragraph 12 of his report, "we can and must do better". The journey ahead will be arduous.

Mr. Tomka (Slovakia): Before dealing with the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, I would like, on behalf of my country and on my own behalf, to express condemnation of the horrible terrorist crimes committed on 11 September here in New York, in Washington, D.C., and in Pennsylvania, as well as to express the support of Slovakia for our American friends and our firm commitment to joining international efforts to eradicate terrorism and its roots.

I would like to express Slovakia's great appreciation for the excellent work done by the Secretary-General. On behalf of my country, I wish Mr. Kofi Annan every success during his second term as Secretary-General of the United Nations. All of us know that the coming years will be demanding and challenging for our Organization, but they also bear promise.

The annual report carefully itemizes all areas of work where the United Nations plays an important role. The report clearly indicates the tasks and activities of our Organization. However, if we want to be successful in achieving our goals of securing peace, ensuring respect for human rights, fostering development, eradicating poverty and inequality and promoting justice and prosperity, as stipulated in the Millennium Declaration, we should strengthen our political will and bear in mind our common values.

I would like to focus on an important point made by the Secretary-General in his report, in connection with his effort to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to one of prevention. Slovakia fully agrees that the prevention of conflict is a moral imperative in today's world. It is a humanitarian necessity if we are to save innocent lives. At the same time, it is an economic necessity, because of the extremely high price of war and post-war reconstruction. Prevention — taking action before conflict occurs — is politically necessary to ensure the credibility of international cooperation, in particular as concerns the United Nations. Some progress has been achieved in developing the capacity of the United Nations to prevent conflict, as set out by the Secretary-General last June in his report (A/55/985) to the General Assembly and the Security Council on the prevention of armed conflict. We firmly believe that the United Nations has an essential role in preventive diplomacy by virtue of its mandate, legitimacy and wide-ranging capabilities.

Stressing the United Nations role in preventive diplomacy does not mean disregarding the primary responsibility of the parties to any dispute or conflict to settle peacefully their dispute themselves. The obligation to do so, as stated in Article 2, paragraph 3, of the Charter, is a cornerstone of international law.

The key question for the international community in the face of potential conflict is not whether preventive diplomacy is an option, but how, when and by whom such diplomacy should be exercised. The main objective of this effort is to establish trust, and in this respect Slovakia strongly supports the recommendations of the Secretary-General. The ongoing discussion on the role of regional organizations, non-governmental actors and others in preventing conflicts is welcome and fully legitimate.

Civil society is an important factor in preventive diplomacy. The United Nations and others involved in preventing conflicts must have access to the viewpoints and concerns of civil society, through formal as well as informal channels. Non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and prominent individuals may have a unique ability to gain access to the roots of a conflict and to try to defuse it. Involving them might also be the right way to avoid overstraining the United Nations system.

In this context, let me mention Slovakia's active participation in the political and military activities of the international community in the search for a peaceful solution to the conflicts in different parts of the world. In recent years we have significantly increased the number of our contingents in peacekeeping operations. At present our troops are spread throughout the world — in infantry contingents in the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and in the United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP); in a level II hospital in the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET); and working as deminers in Ethiopia and Eritrea — all in all, 608 deployed persons.

It would nevertheless be wrong not to realize the potential of a preventive deployment of United Nations peacekeepers. A small-scale international presence could be contemplated in a number of cases in which there is a danger that a dispute or a tense situation could escalate into conflict, to the point where large-scale and costly interventions would be the only remaining option.

We believe that the prevention of conflict will be a defining and fundamental task for the international community through international cooperation, with the United Nations at the centre. The international community cannot stand by as a passive observer as situations and disputes grow into armed conflicts, either among States or within them, as has most frequently been the case in the past decade and might also be in future.

The United Nations was born out of the horror of war. The face of war has become even uglier, involving civilians on a large scale, and its most recent — and ugliest — form bears the name of terrorism. Slovakia like the rest of the civilized world, strongly condemns all forms of terrorism and violence. We will take an active part in our common endeavour to combat terrorism.

Last year we successfully resolved a problem which had burdened our Organization for years. By taking the necessary decisions on financial problems and adopting scales of assessment for both the regular and peacekeeping budgets, we have created the basic prerequisites for the better functioning of our Organization in the future. Nevertheless, we remain concerned by the financial situation of the Organization, which, to a great extent, is due to the fact that not all Member States obey the rules we have agreed on or live up to the pledges they have made.

We believe that humanity is in great need of our Organization. Through our firm political will we should act together, so that the principles and goals of our Organization can be successfully achieved.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): In the wake of the recent tragic terrorist attacks on American soil, which resulted in the loss of so many innocent lives, allow me to offer my condolences to the delegation of the United States of America. These shocking and utterly appalling terrorist acts have been strongly condemned by the Iranian people and Government, and we hope that concerted action — within the parameters of international law and under the auspices of the United Nations — will enable the international community to bring the perpetrators of these atrocious acts to justice. My delegation will participate in next week's debate on terrorism and will express in detail its views on how to combat the scourge of terrorism.

I would like to join previous speakers in commending the Secretary-General for having produced a comprehensive and thoughtful report on the work of the Organization. It clearly shows how the challenges facing the United Nations have become more complex, as have its responses. The report also clearly reflects the extensive experience and dedicated efforts of the Secretary-General in his leadership of the Organization.

Considering the role of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and security to be an essential part of its global responsibilities, my delegation fully endorses the emphasis put in the report on the need to move this Organization from a culture of reaction to one of prevention. The steadfastness of the Secretary-General in the past few years in steering the United Nations in this direction is promising. We concur with him that practical steps should be taken with a view to putting the concept of conflict prevention into practice and matching rhetoric with action.

In this respect, we need to pay greater attention, in a more timely manner, to the root causes of tension in various regions, and these should be addressed by the humanitarian and development agencies of the United Nations system together with the Bretton Woods institutions. Such an approach should be an integral part of a preventive strategy. The dispatch of fact-finding and confidence-building missions and the development of regional mechanisms constitute, among other things, appropriate measures enabling the United Nations to act more effectively to prevent the outbreak of armed conflict. The Islamic Republic of Iran, located in a volatile region, continues to support the efforts of the Secretary-General in the area of conflict prevention and remains prepared to assist him in his endeavours.

In the area of peacemaking, the efforts of the Secretary-General and his colleagues during the past year have also been commendable. It is regrettable that, despite his personal attention to the ongoing crisis in the occupied Palestinian territories and his two visits to the area, the continued aggressive policy of the Israelis did not allow for any lessening of the suffering of the Palestinians. The policy of wilfully killing defenceless civilians and their suffocation at the hands of the Israeli armed forces continues, as does the inaction of the Security Council, which is failing to live up to its responsibility in assigning a United Nations protection force to the area.

While the involvement of the Secretary-General in the Palestinian question is a positive development, we believe that, unless his efforts are effectively complemented by the Council and the major Powers, the realization of the basic rights of Palestinians, which is a prerequisite for the return of peace to the area, will remain elusive.

The Secretary-General, in his report, refers to the impact on some countries in Central Asia of acts perpetrated by extremist and terrorist forces, which are in part related to the situation in Afghanistan. Here, I need to stress that not only the central Asian countries, but, in fact, all of Afghanistan's neighbours have been significantly hurt by the disorder in that country. Moreover, the recent terrorist acts on American territory brought to the forefront the implications of the chaos and lawlessness in Afghanistan for the international community as a whole.

We have always reiterated that our country's interest is best served if peace and tranquillity are brought about in Afghanistan. Therefore we pledge to lend our active support to the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy aimed at restoring peace and helping Afghans form a broad-based and representative government in their country. We also welcome the continued preparedness of the United Nations to assist in the political, development and humanitarian fields in order to address the root causes of instability in the area surrounding Afghanistan.

As concerns peacekeeping operations, which continue to be one of the key instruments available to the United Nations, we believe that the capacity of this Organization effectively to plan and manage peacekeeping operations should be enhanced. Therefore, we welcome the Secretary-General's proposals, contained in document A/55/977, aimed at developing the United Nations capacity in this area, including the development of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. It is important that peacekeeping operations be provided with clearly defined mandates, objectives and command structures, as well as secure financing. We also fully endorse the view of the Secretary-General that peacekeeping must be supported and accompanied by a process of peace-building to prevent the recurrence of armed conflict and to permit recovery and development.

With respect to disarmament, I share the concerns and misgivings of the Secretary-General about the current level of international negotiations on disarmament and arms control. Despite the necessity to intensify the efforts to promote international peace and security, negotiations on strengthening the prevention and banning of the development and use of weapons of mass destruction are now faced with major obstacles. Conclusion of the verification protocol of the Biological Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty preparatory work have now reached a deadlock due to the position of the United States.

Unfortunately, the same attitude has impaired progress towards concluding effective norms and guidelines to prevent the spread of a destabilizing accumulation of small arms in areas of conflict. However, the recent adoption of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is a major step forward to achieving our objective, which needs to be pursued vigorously.

Missiles are also an important issue in the international agenda, meriting full and serious consideration. The best approach here, as the Secretary-General has indicated in his report, should be to aim at "multilaterally negotiated norms", which is also a focus of the draft resolutions adopted on the issue by the General Assembly, submitted by my country since 1999. I extend my appreciation to the Secretary-General for providing assistance for the establishment of the panel of experts to address the issue of missiles in all its aspects.

International cooperation in the field of human rights continues to play a fundamental role in the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. This is particularly important in the United Nations processes of both standard setting and implementation. If earnestly pursued, international cooperation is essentially and inherently capable of generating political will, a sense of partnership and harmony within the present multiracial and multicultural world in advancing the human core values, human rights and democracy. This is what the United Nations is all about.

The World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance recently concluded its work in Durban, South Africa. I express my warm congratulations to the people and Government of South Africa on convening the conference. It has to be acknowledged that the conference had great potential for bearing even more fruit in making a real difference in the global fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, but this, regrettably, was thwarted by some political circles. Nevertheless, it is our hope that all Governments will combine their efforts to effectively implement the Programme of Action adopted in Durban.

Let me turn to the International Conference on Financing for Development, a very important event for the international community as a whole and particularly for all developing countries. All of us, both developed and developing countries, are acutely aware of the historic standing and comprehensive process that we have collectively followed for convening this conference, expectations for which are very high; its impact on the major developmental issues was also acknowledged by the Millennium Declaration. The important items on the conference agenda — including trade, financial flows, external debt and systemic issues, including the reform of the international financial architecture — make the conference a historic and unique turning point for a bold, innovative and yet continuing process. As such, the Mexico conference can set the stage for basic major parameters towards forging a new consensus in which the international community strives to define collective objectives and goals for financing for development and takes the necessary measures to achieve them. The main approach in the conference should be focused on finding innovative measures to address the major challenges of globalization in the field of financing for development, while bearing in mind its complexities and benefits. In this process, the international community should strive to engage in constructive dialogue and negotiations leading to a fruitful outcome and achievement for all.

Convening the special Session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS was a timely response by the United Nations to this tragic epidemic, which is destroying the social fabric in the most affected countries, reversing their development achievements. The severity of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the most formidable development challenge of our time, particularly in Africa, calls for coordinated international resolve and determination to address the roots of the crisis and to undertake the practical ways and means to deal with it effectively. The situation in Asia is also seriously threatening, emphasizing the necessity of preventive measures.

Apart from all urgent relief efforts and short-term remedies, the ultimate solution can be found in eradicating poverty through the realization of genuine, long-term development. To this end, securing a global commitment to enhance resources and the intensification of national, regional and international efforts to combat it in a comprehensive manner is urgently required. The establishment of a global fund, proposed by the Secretary-General, could be a step forward in this regard if adequate resources, commensurate with the magnitude of the problem, were mobilized and managed free from political considerations and conditionalities, taking into account the concerns of all nations. Moreover, needless to say, the imperative of moral and religious values, the centrality of the family as the basic unit of society, and responsible individual conduct are also indispensable for a successful fight against the epidemic and are equally essential.

The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and its preparatory process. This summit will provide a unique opportunity for the international community to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the achievements, constraints and shortcomings in the implementation of Agenda 21. We firmly believe that the summit should aim at the removal of the obstacles impeding the implementation of the Rio commitments, and provide, in particular, the developing world with adequate financial and technological support. In our view, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities should continue to be the guiding principle for the deliberations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

With regard to paragraphs 175 and 176 of the Secretary-General's report, I would like to indicate that Iran has actively participated in the discussions on international environmental governance and will continue to provide its contribution to that process. Strengthening international environmental governance must be viewed through the lens of sustainable development. That would ensure the integration of the three interdependent pillars of environmental protection, economic growth and social development in a balanced manner. In that regard, the Commission on Sustainable Development, which is the main forum for high-level policy debate on sustainable development, should also be strengthened.

With regard to the United Nations Forum on Forests, Iran has actively participated in discussions on forests and will continue to do so. We sincerely hope that this new body will achieve its objectives in enhancing sustainable forest management through the implementation of proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the International Forum on Forests. In that context, we emphasize the importance of giving attention to the concerns and interests of low-forest-cover countries.

The President in the Chair.

Programme of work

The President: I should like to outline our programme of work for the next two weeks.

As members were already informed, the General Assembly will hold a debate on agenda item 166, "Measures to eliminate international terrorism", starting Monday, 1 October, in the morning.

On Thursday, 4 October, in the morning, the General Assembly will start its consideration of agenda item 11, "Report of the Security Council". The report of the Security Council will be issued tomorrow, Wednesday, 26 September, as document A/56/2. The list of speakers for item 11 is now open.

On Monday, 8 October, in the morning, we will hold the election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council.

On Friday, 12 October, in the morning, the General Assembly and the Security Council will hold concurrent meetings to elect a member of the International Court of Justice.

I will soon inform the Assembly of the scheduling of other plenary items.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

United Nations

A/56/PV.10

General Assembly

Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

10th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 25 September 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo .... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Sevilla Somoza (Nicaragua), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 10 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/56/1 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

Mr. Kastrup (Germany): Later this afternoon, our Belgian colleague is going to speak on behalf of the European Union. I would like to make some additional remarks. Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General and his staff for their thorough and detailed report. This report impressively shows the work done by the United Nations across a broad array of responsibilities. It includes new and fascinating chapters on recent developments in the work of the United Nations.

The opening of this fifty-sixth General Assembly has been postponed owing to the tragic events here in New York, in Washington and in Pennsylvania. The work of the United Nations came to a halt — but only for a few hours. The Security Council then stated unanimously in its seminal resolution 1368 (2001) that the terrorist attacks perpetrated against the people of the United States of America present a threat to international peace and security, thus confirming a legal basis for resolute action against the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of the attacks. The General Assembly in its first resolution, after the tragic events in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, condemned those unprecedented and barbaric terrorist acts.

"Achieving peace and security" is the title of the first chapter of the Secretary-General's report. Peace and security are at stake, as the faceless and barbaric acts of terrorism were directed against the very fabric that defines our nations: respect for human life and human dignity and the values of liberty, tolerance, democracy and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Chancellor Schröder said in the German Parliament a couple of days ago that the issue is not a clash of civilizations. The issue is whether there will be civilization in this one world or not. The attacks are the expression of a criminal mindset, which can target any of our nations, regardless of faith or social order. There must be no doubt that there is no political or religious justification for terrorist violence. And no Member State of the United Nations should protect or harbour those criminals.

The leaders of the European Union met last Friday in an extraordinary session. They discussed ways and means of integrating as many countries as possible in a worldwide system of security and prosperity. Issues addressed included the provision of incentives within the framework of development cooperation to States that cooperate in the battle against terrorism. A particular priority in this context is the creation of a basis for political and economic stabilization in the crisis regions. Above all, we must

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do everything we can to achieve a breakthrough for peace in the Middle East.

European Union member States realize that terrorism must be fought on a global front. The European Union has, therefore, called for the broadest possible global coalition against terrorism, under the United Nations aegis. The United Nations has a central role in coordinating and reinvigorating the international response to terrorism. We trust that the Security Council and this General Assembly will live up to this role. Members of the United Nations can rely on the cooperation of my delegation in combating terrorism. We are ready to enter into negotiations on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

The Secretary-General has most pertinently underlined that the United Nations must have the courage to recognize that there are common aims, but also common enemies. Our work on different aspects of globalization, and our desire to find answers to the challenges of globalization, must include a resolve to globally fight terrorism. Our work of implementing the Millennium Declaration should give high priority to our commitments in paragraph 9 to take concerted action against international terrorism and to accede as soon as possible to all the relevant international conventions.

The United Nations must engage its full potential to identify and eventually eradicate the roots of terrorism. Development questions should therefore be addressed ever more vigorously. In this respect, we must make sure that international terrorism must not infringe on our common efforts and commitments aimed at promoting sustainable development, an equitable distribution of the benefits of globalization and the achievement of the millennium goals, above all poverty eradication.

We must work for the full and timely implementation of the plan of action adopted during the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, hosted by the European Union in Brussels in May. We must ensure the success of the ongoing process, as well as of the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Monterrey next spring, and we must strive for a successful, development-oriented round of the World Trade Organization in Doha in November.

The Secretary-General has widely stated in his report, with a particular view to Central Asia, that the search for peaceful solutions to regional conflicts, which all too often are a breeding ground for terrorism, must be identified. We should accelerate our pace towards the establishment of the International Criminal Court, as a timely response to combat impunity for crimes against humanity. The dialogue among and within civilizations must be promoted as an antidote to blind and savage terror, bigotry and hatred. And the plight of those who suffer from terrorism, be it as immediate victims or refugees, must be addressed.

Let us use this session of the General Assembly to combine our efforts to make the United Nations work and to take the necessary steps to implement the Millennium Declaration, including its reform package for the United Nations. Streamlining our work and making the United Nations more responsive to global needs and pressing problems remains high on the agenda. Germany stands ready to work in the General Assembly towards a successful fifty-sixth session.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia): Before delivering my statement on the agenda item before us, I should like once again, on behalf of the people and the Government of Indonesia, to express to the people and the Government of the United States our deep feelings of sorrow at the tragic events that took place on 11 September this year.

Our grief at this unconscionable loss of life and material devastation has no bounds, as the attacks took the lives of people from many countries, including Indonesia. We strongly condemn such terrorist attacks and horrific acts of premeditated violence. Our deepest condolences go to the bereaved families, and our sympathy goes to the countless victims affected by these terrible events.

Indonesia welcomes the annual report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, which offers a comprehensive review of the activities that have been carried out during the past year. It shows how the mandates of the Member States are being fulfilled in responding to the new challenges of a changing world and embodies ideas and proposals that could contribute to the further effectiveness and strengthening of the United Nations. It also depicts the functioning of the Organization and its multidimensional aspects and the challenges the international community must confront at the beginning of the millennium. From the details contained therein we can see both its strength and weaknesses, as well as a clear direction for the United Nations in the future.

The Secretary-General reminds us that peace and security remain an essential part of the Organization's global responsibility and rightly highlights development cooperation as an overriding challenge since a majority of the world population is mired in poverty. He has warned that in the era of globalization critical issues cannot be resolved by States acting alone, but on the basis of cooperation, partnerships and burden-sharing among the Member States, the United Nations, regional organizations and civil society.

Thus, when we speak of globalization, we speak of threats, weapons, communication, environment, economy and other pertinent issues in a global context. All this means far-reaching changes are taking place in world affairs. No nation is immune to them. They require that we make fundamental adjustments in our approaches to global issues of concern and interest to all nations through a strengthened and democratized United Nations.

Indonesia's participation in the Organization has been predicated on a firm commitment to the principles and objectives of the Charter. Beyond this, however, we have attached particular importance to multilateralism, whether regional or global, in peacefully resolving the myriad problems confronted by the international community.

My delegation is gratified to note the reference made in paragraph 37 of the report to the ongoing endeavours being made by my Government in dealing with a wide range of issues facing our nation. We regard our multi-party democracy and the existence of human rights as the central legitimizing tenets of good governance. We are now undergoing a profound democratic process based on openness, tolerance and inclusiveness.

In realizing the goals of a political system responsive to the interests of our people, in accelerating economic recovery and in preserving social harmony, we have naturally attached high priority to the preservation of our national unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty, which precludes fissiparous tendencies. The national vision of Indonesia in the millennium would be the preservation of democratic pluralism and cultural diversity and the creation of a modern State that will provide opportunities for its people regardless of ethnicity, religion or other differences.

My delegation agrees with the importance given in the report to conflict prevention and peacemaking as an integral part of the Organization's concerted efforts to maintain international peace and security. This dual approach would uphold the core mandate of the United Nations and its mission to forestall conflicts, review mechanisms and institutions and formulate a strategy for protecting humanity from indiscriminate violence and armed conflicts. The vital role of all parts of the United Nations system in reducing and eradicating the underlying causes of conflicts has to be acknowledged. Appropriately, the crucial role of regional and subregional organizations in preventive and peacemaking strategies is recognized in the report, as conflicts are inseparable from their regional contexts. We welcome the Secretary-General's intention to take a number of initiatives to forestall conflicts and to build an edifice of peacemaking, in particular, through the development of regional prevention strategies together with the various agencies of the United Nations.

In this regard, the report has drawn our attention to the modalities adopted by the United Nations in Africa and elsewhere. These include, inter alia, identifying potential sources of conflict, promoting democratization, assisting in the political, developmental and humanitarian fields, demobilizing and disarming combatants, fostering national reconciliation among the warring parties and demonstrating the utility of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. Taken together, they offer some valuable lessons in the efforts spearheaded by the United Nations to achieve the twin objectives of conflict prevention and peacemaking.

With regard to disarmament, the report has noted the uncertainties concerning strategic relationships and the persistence of diverse views on priorities. Consequently, there is little doubt that the question of nuclear disarmament has entered a new, dangerous era, as commitments undertaken at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons have remained unfulfilled. Further compounding the situation is the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament. Meanwhile, it is disturbing to learn from the report that global military expenditure has registered a steep increase in many parts of the world. These ominous developments call for the resumption of negotiations on the priority issues of disarmament, with the determination to reach agreement.

As for the economic sphere, we fully support the Secretary-General's assertion, in paragraph 8 of the report, that "development cooperation is a solid foundation on which to build stability, economic justice and social development". Certainly the work of the Organization in assisting development and helping to eradicate poverty and inequality will contribute greatly to establishing the building blocks of sustainable peace.

The defining moment for the United Nations in the field of economic development in the past year was probably the historic reaffirmation by Member States of the purposes and principles of the United Nations and the adoption of the Millennium Declaration. In a world of rapid globalization and economic integration, flexibility is imperative. We therefore agree with the report that, in meeting the new demands on the United Nations, the tradition of innovation should be preserved while the principles of the Charter are maintained. Thus, in addressing the unbridled forces of the market unleashed by globalization, including a widening economic gap, we fully concur with the Secretary-General that unprecedented levels of financial commitment and international cooperation will be required. I would even go further to say that if such an increase in international cooperation is not forthcoming, the economic gap will continue to widen, the digital divide will not be bridged and the plight of three quarters of humankind will further deteriorate, resulting in further poverty and deprivation for the developing countries and instability for all.

In addressing such global problems, we could not agree more with the Secretary-General that the efforts to render globalization inclusive and equitable will pose a daunting challenge in the years ahead and that if the goals of development and poverty eradication are to be met, economic growth must be accelerated in the developing countries. Positive steps taken over the past year in that direction include the cooperation of the United Nations in the formulation of national poverty-reduction strategies in 60 countries and its help in the writing of comprehensive poverty-reduction strategy papers in others. Such positive steps can be clearly seen in the activities of the United Nations Development Group, under the chairmanship of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the prime agency of the United Nations for promoting development.

It is encouraging that public sector management programmes in 78 countries have resulted in civil service reform, national action to tackle corruption, the promotion of transparency and the adoption by some Governments of results-based management to advance public sector efficiency and accountability. We fully support these programmes and consider them to be extremely relevant to Indonesia in its current efforts to build strong democratic institutions and processes.

In this connection, UNDP, at its Executive Board meeting in New York early this month, endorsed the second country cooperation framework for Indonesia (CCF). We appreciate the way in which the CCF has been prepared, involving broad-based consultations and discussions inclusive of government, civil society, the international community and the United Nations. Indonesia's national priorities and four basic development goals were well reflected in the process of formulating the second CCF. These include the legitimization of democratic governance, poverty reduction and institutionalized mechanisms for managing both social and ethnic conflicts and environmental sustainability.

In this context, we commend the full involvement of the United Nations in the forthcoming International Conference on Financing for Development and its preparatory process. We also are thankful to the Secretary-General for his report on this issue, which includes a comprehensive set of 87 recommendations on all key aspects of financing for development. We also commend the Secretary-General for appointing the High-level Panel on Financing for Development, chaired by Mr. Ernesto Zedillo. The report of the Panel, together with other input at the national level, intergovernmental initiatives at regional and international levels and substantive contributions from other major stakeholders, should greatly help to enhance understanding and facilitate the tackling by Member countries of the issues and concepts of the International Conference on Financing for Development.

With regard to access to information and communication technologies (ICT), we agree with the Secretary-General that such access is an important instrument for reaping the potential benefits of globalization. Thus, we welcome the launching of the

United Nations ICT Task Force, which represents a major outcome of the 2000 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council. We fully support the activities and mission of the Task Force and trust that it will vigorously promote accessibility and connectivity for people from the developing countries, with particular attention being paid to the rural poor and small- and medium-sized enterprises.

As for the critically important issue of sustainable development, we are pleased to note from the report that numerous initiatives and activities have been undertaken by communities at all levels in implementing Agenda 21 and the relevant outcomes of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. It is also encouraging that a growing number of companies have adopted sustainable development as an essential element of corporate stewardship. In this regard, we believe that all progress achieved on normative and institutional issues should be coupled with the full implementation of commitments undertaken, particularly by the developed countries, as stipulated in Agenda 21.

Indonesia, as a developing country that has developed its own national Agenda 21 and sectoral Agenda 21, considers the support of the international community and the United Nations system to be crucial if we are to achieve our common objectives. Furthermore, since poverty and unsustainable patterns of production and consumption are considered to be overriding causes of environmental degradation, it is important that a bottom-up approach has been taken to the preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, as that will best enable us to identify ways and means of addressing those problems. Likewise, the launching of a poverty and environment initiative will be of crucial importance in identifying practical policy measures to advance the twin goals of poverty reduction and environmental regeneration.

With regard to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in September 2002, Indonesia would like to reaffirm its full support for the overarching goals of reinvigorating the global commitments to sustainable development at the highest level and of ensuring the full implementation of Agenda 21. While taking note of the progress that has been achieved at local, national, subregional and regional levels, we are of the view that there is an urgent need to ensure that the approach will be able to identify progress achieved and constraints faced, as well as to provide practical and applicable solutions for achieving the full implementation of Agenda 21.

In this context, we believe that international cooperation, including that secured through the promotion of partnership, is crucial in ensuring the achievement of our common goals. Moreover, as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit, Indonesia is deeply committed to the success of the preparations in the lead-up to a successful Summit. In the same vein, we share the view expressed in the report that there is a need to ensure the implementation of all targets set by all of the heads of State, as outlined in the Millennium Declaration.

In the area of humanitarian relief, the report appropriately notes the need to achieve greater efficiency on the part of the aid community. In the days ahead, this need will not diminish, but may, in fact, become more acute. Furthermore, my delegation would like to note the progress that has been made in recent years in protecting civilians threatened during armed conflict. That progress must not be lost, and every effort must be made to safeguard and protect civilian populations, particularly women and children.

Indonesia, for its part, will continue to contribute towards achieving what the Secretary-General has termed a culture of protection. We look forward to strengthening our relationships at the national level, where Indonesia is still in great need of support, as well as at the international level, in support of the principles of international humanitarian law. Thus, in providing humanitarian assistance during armed conflicts, we must take fully into account the continuum from relief to development and the transition from conflict to peace. As has been clearly indicated, failure to plan for and improve the transition between relief and development can undo short-term results. We would therefore like to reaffirm our belief that for disaster management to be effective, it should take place in the context of poverty eradication and development programmes.

In his report, the Secretary-General also touches on the issues of immunization and health. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to note that, although the twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly has been postponed, our efforts on behalf of children must continue to move forward. Indonesia will continue to work towards achieving a world fit for children. In that context, I am pleased to report that Indonesia has signed the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We would like to applaud the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for its tireless efforts in promoting the implementation of the Convention and for ensuring the survival, protection and development of children everywhere, including in Indonesia.

Indonesia hopes that during these uncertain times the aspirations of those in vulnerable groups will not be overlooked. The Second World Assembly on Ageing, to be held next year, will offer an important opportunity to update and refocus our attention on this issue after 20 years. Likewise, issues relating to the disabled and to youth must also not be lost in the days ahead.

The Secretary-General has also appropriately touched on the issue of gender and population, noting the relationship between women's inequality and their health, education and social and economic participation. Of equal importance, mention is made of the zero-tolerance policy on violence against women — a policy that Indonesia has adopted and fully endorses.

In the Millennium Declaration, adopted last September, our heads of State and Government solemnly pledged to take concerted action against international terrorism and called upon States to accede as soon as possible to all of the relevant international conventions. Indonesia would like to underscore that terrorism increasingly threatens our democratic processes and national security. Hence, we look forward to the forthcoming deliberations in the General Assembly leading to the adoption of concrete measures of international cooperation to combat global terrorism.

Finally, we are aware of the unprecedented circumstances under which the general debate has been postponed and the consequent dislocation of the regular session of the General Assembly. This has no doubt necessitated a rearrangement and readjustment of the schedule and of the agenda of the current session, with the cooperation and coordination of the President, the Member States and the Secretary-General. We remain hopeful that this will not necessarily constitute a precedent and that the future work of the General Assembly can be conducted according to schedule.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): Allow me at the outset to extend to Mr. Han our warm congratulations on his assumption of the presidency of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I would like to assure him of the full cooperation and support of the Namibian delegation.

It is significant that this body is considering the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization at a time when the crucial role of the United Nations will become even more evident, as the world community ponders how to deal effectively with the scourge of terrorism following the barbaric and indiscriminate terrorist attacks on New York, Washington and Pennsylvania on 11 September of this year. We are saddened by the loss of innocent lives and the destruction of property.

I would like, therefore, to take this opportunity to express once again our profound sympathy and heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of the United States of America, and to the bereaved families in particular. Namibia strongly condemns this heinous crime and demands that the perpetrators be brought to justice.

My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and all-encompassing report. In our view, the report provides an important reflection on the significant achievements and other essential ongoing activities of the United Nations. It also points to the problems and difficulties encountered during the period under review. We subscribe to many of the thoughtful ideas of the Secretary-General on the efforts to enhance and strengthen the role of the United Nations, but, at the same time, we share the deep concerns he has about menaces such as conflicts and HIV/AIDS.

We are considering this report in the wake of the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, in which our heads of State and Government pledged their collective resolve and responsibility to eradicate poverty, underdevelopment and disease, and to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level. In this connection, we note with gratitude the Secretary-General's road map, which offers a programme for the implementation of the objectives of the Millennium Declaration.

As time does not permit me to deal with all the important issues in the report of the Secretary-General, I wish to comment on some of them which are of particular concern to my delegation.

On conflict prevention and peacemaking, my delegation agrees with the importance that is placed on the concept of conflict prevention, especially in the light of the numerous conflicts afflicting the African continent.

We support the Secretary-General in his efforts to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. While it is the primary responsibility of the United Nations to prevent armed conflict, in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, we believe that regional and subregional organizations also play a crucial role. We therefore call for improved coordination of efforts between the United Nations and regional organizations. In this connection, proactive approaches to conflicts have already resulted in positive results in a number of instances where multiple causes were threatening to explode into much wider, devastating conflicts, which had the potential to destabilize whole regions.

However, as correctly noted by the Secretary-General, the development and humanitarian agencies of the United Nations system, together with the Bretton Woods institutions, have a vital role to play in creating a peaceful environment, as well as in addressing the root causes of conflicts at early stages. The international community must furthermore begin to match rhetoric with action. In this regard, my delegation looks forward to a further discussion of the important recommendations by the Secretary-General in his report on the prevention of armed conflict.

With regard to Africa, we agree with the Secretary-General that "efforts to enhance African peacekeeping capacity cannot become a justification for reduced engagement in the continent" (*A/56/1, para. 49*). The United Nations and the international community as a whole should continue to provide the necessary resources to peacekeeping operations in Africa, just as it does with peacekeeping operations elsewhere.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, the implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement is progressing smoothly. The ceasefire has been holding for some time now, and the parties are withdrawing in line with their commitments under the Kampala plan and the Harare sub-plans for the disengagement and redeployment of forces. Furthermore, there is remarkable progress with regard to the inter-Congolese dialogue.

Despite all these positive developments, phase II of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) has not yet been completed. My delegation is of the view that in order to prevent a vacuum in the current favourable conditions, it has become critical for the deployment of phase III of MONUC to be approved speedily, with due consideration of the complexity and enormity of the peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. At the same time, it is important for the international community to assist the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in their efforts to rebuild their country.

With regard to the situation in Western Sahara, my delegation has noted with deep concern the proposed framework agreement on the status of Western Sahara. I wish to reiterate the position of my delegation that the question of Western Sahara is a question of decolonization. Therefore, the aspirations of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination and national independence cannot be compromised. We therefore believe that the United Nations settlement plan for Western Sahara, which has been accepted by both parties, remains the only legal instrument through which to resolve the question of Western Sahara. Efforts should therefore be made to implement it and not to undermine it.

As stated by the Secretary-General, the HIV/AIDS pandemic remains a catastrophe of global proportions. While we agree that the disease is spreading with alarming speed, it is most encouraging that the international community is fighting back and that, in their Millennium Declaration, world leaders resolved to halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the successful conclusion of the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS. We commend the Secretary-General for the initiative to establish a Global AIDS and health fund aimed at mobilizing resources to address the epidemic. We trust that the international community will contribute generously to this fund. We support the establishment of a high-level inter-agency task force on HIV/AIDS with the responsibility of strengthening coordination within the United Nations system.

Development and poverty eradication remain an important priority for the United Nations and individual countries. The African continent bears a disproportionate burden in overcoming these problems of great priority. In his acceptance speech, the President made the development of Africa one of his priorities during his tenure of office as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We wholeheartedly welcome that commitment. For its part, Africa is showing its resolve to overcome its development challenges. The adoption of the New African Initiative by the Organization of African Unity is proof in this regard. My delegation is extremely gratified by the decision of the Economic and Social Council to rally behind the unified framework that African leaders have launched. We call on the rest of the international community to do the same.

My delegation attaches great importance to the upcoming high-level International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, which we believe should be convened within the context of the commitments made at the Millennium Summit. We equally attach great importance to the upcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development to take place next year in South Africa. This will afford the international community an excellent opportunity to review in a comprehensive manner whether we, the Member States, have implemented fully the commitments we made at the Rio Summit. My delegation will continue to participate actively in the preparatory processes and looks forward to a positive outcome of these meetings, which must fully take into account the needs of all developing countries.

Once again, my delegation wishes to assure the President of our support during his presidency, and we look forward to actively participating in the rest of the work of this session.

Mr. Sharma (India): Allow me to convey our congratulations to the President on his assuming the office of the President of the General Assembly. We are confident that his wise and able leadership will guide us through a session that has begun under a terrible shadow. We also place on record our appreciation for Mr. Harri Holkeri's stewardship of the last General Assembly. May I also thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization and for his tireless efforts in promoting peace and development.

11 September was a dark day for humanity. We grieve over the loss of so many innocent lives. We share the pain, the outrage and the revulsion of the people of the United States at the barbaric and senseless attack on them.

Nearly half of the membership of the United Nations is embraced in that grievous and colossal tragedy. We know, from our own bitter experience, the toll terrorism exacts, particularly from open, liberal, pluralistic and democratic societies. Over the last decade, tens of thousands of our citizens — at work, at prayer, in schools and in hospitals — have died at the hands of terrorists; 250 more died on 11 September in the World Trade Center. The human cost exacted from the murdered and the maimed is incalculable. Left unchecked, the cancer of terrorism will spread, bringing more deaths and more destruction to more countries. Condemnations do not touch terrorism. Its roots run deep and wide; they can be uprooted only through global cooperation and concerted action against terrorists as well as those who aid, abet, finance, train, harbour or in any manner assist them. There is no justification for terrorism, and none should be accepted.

We would suggest that future reports of the Secretary-General should focus more closely on the issue of terrorism, given the universal condemnation and commitment to eradicate this evil that we have seen. We also hope that the comprehensive convention against international terrorism now under negotiation can be finalized at this session of the General Assembly. Its early adoption and entry into force will provide a framework for international action against terrorism.

Armed conflict is the traditional threat to peace, prosperity and security. Studies show that the number of armed conflicts has dropped in the last few years, but they still create instability and inflict suffering on millions. While we agree with many of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the prevention of armed conflict, we believe that action is required to strengthen and spread democratic governance, to remove poverty and to seriously address the question of disarmament. Above all, there must be respect for the principles of inter-State relations and a commitment to settle disputes through peaceful negotiations.

Integral to our efforts to end terrorism and prevent armed conflict is the denial to the perpetrators of access to arms and ammunition. We share the Secretary-General's assessment that the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is a significant first step, but we must urgently and fully implement it while building a consensus on the outstanding issues, particularly on the supply of weapons to non-State actors, the risks of which are self-evident. We call on all States to join in keeping weapons out of the hands and the reach of terrorists and non-State actors.

But while we address the problem of small arms we must remember that complete and global nuclear disarmament continues to remain an unfulfilled promise. The Secretary-General is right in reminding us that at the Millennium Summit our leaders resolved to strive to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. We will look carefully at the strategies proposed in the road map for the implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

We have followed very closely, and supported, the Secretary-General's efforts to improve the Secretariat's ability to support peacekeeping operations. We continue to be among the leading contributors of troops and police to those operations. But peacekeeping cannot be a substitute for the task of nation-building. Therefore, while we support the proper coordination of all elements in a complex peacekeeping operation, we continue to believe that the mandates of a peacekeeping operation should not be confused with those of a post-conflict peace-building mission. Blurring the distinction between peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building not only leads to unrealistic expectations and unachievable mandates, but also prevents a clear exit strategy for United Nations peacekeepers.

The crisis in the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone last year clearly reinforced the need for a strengthened partnership between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries. While we are aware that the Council has tried to address this problem since then in its resolutions, unless the recommendations of the Brahimi Panel — which have been amplified in proposals made by a number of troop-contributing countries — are implemented, there are few prospects for such a partnership emerging. The absence of cooperation between the Council and troop-contributing countries has been a bane of United Nations peacekeeping and needs to be comprehensively addressed at the earliest.

While terrorism and armed conflict pose dramatic and violent threats, endemic poverty is the single most important challenge confronting humanity. In the Millennium Declaration our leaders resolved to reduce by half the number of people who live in absolute poverty by 2015. The *Rural Poverty Report 2001* of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) finds that this goal will not be met, as 30 million people must escape poverty each year if it is to be met, but only 10 million are able to do so. With a much sharper focus on poverty eradication, the United Nations must strive to ensure that justice is done for the members of the world's population who earn less than $2 a day. We note what it has been possible to do in the United Nations system so far, but we believe we need to do much more.

In Africa the failure to eradicate poverty has been the most acute. The rate of poverty eradication there, according to IFAD, is six times too slow to meet the 2015 deadline. The New African Initiative, adopted on 11 July 2001 at the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Summit, centred on African ownership and called on the rest of the world to complement its efforts. We note from the Secretary-General's report that entities of the United Nations have remained deeply involved in a wide range of African development issues during the period under review. In our view, it is also important to ensure that African priorities and concerns are fully reflected in that engagement and that the process does not become donor-driven.

Where have the development resources of the United Nations system been diverted to? The United Nations Development Programme, the flagship of the development efforts of the United Nations system, is mentioned in 24 paragraphs of the Secretary General's report — in those dealing with crisis and post-conflict situations, human rights, good governance and the Global Compact — but, curiously, never once in the context of technical assistance for capacity-building in areas that would have a direct impact on poverty eradication.

We need to work collectively to ensure the success of the International Conference on Financing for Development, which is described as a unique intergovernmental process in the Secretary-General's report. For the first time, we will address development in a holistic manner from the perspective of finance. We must use the opportunity provided by the Conference to establish concrete measures and mechanisms that will ensure adequate, secure and predictable financial resources for development. An equitable basis for global development has become the crucial requirement in the management of the process of globalization.

Linked to the outcome of that Conference will be the success of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, where the international community will identify accomplishments and constraints in the implementation of Agenda 21 in the last 10 years. We believe that the United Nations system should help Member States and regional and other bodies contribute to the preparatory process.

We are of the view that the integrity of the three pillars of sustainable development must be maintained, and that environment cannot be de-linked from development. The global partnership forged at Rio is based on that principle. The discussions under way on international environmental governance, mentioned in the report, should take that into account. We believe that the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements is essential for the protection of our common environment.

The advancement and empowerment of women is an important goal of the United Nations. It is a pity, therefore, that there is nothing in the report on the progress made in building on the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, on women, which was held last year. We are also mystified by paragraph 158, which claims that a non-governmental organization introduced a resolution at the March 2000 session of the Commission on Human Rights. We thought that only Member States introduced resolutions. We hope that has not changed.

While the initiatives of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) are important, the report restricts itself only to efforts to monitor human rights. On the promotional side, an area that is important to the developing world, the report is silent, as it is on resolutions addressed to the Secretariat, for example on the issue of equitable geographical representation in OHCHR.

Equally important, the sections of the report on OHCHR's activities do not reflect constraints developing countries face in generating resources to implement various rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights. There is too much stress on the legal aspect of international instruments rather than the developmental aspect. There is an undue emphasis on the question of legal instruments, rather than on the progressive attainment of the goals of human dignity and freedoms, through the promotion and protection not only of civil and political rights, but also of economic, social and cultural rights.

The United Nations role in providing humanitarian assistance is important. The report states that the growing need for this assistance requires greater efficiency in relief efforts. This may be so, but it misses the more important point that additional resources are required. The report notes that, as of June 2001, less than 33 per cent of the requests listed in the consolidated appeals for 2001 had been met. What is, however, even more troubling is that this seems to confirm a trend. In 1994, 80 per cent of the requirements were met; only 59 per cent were met last year.

The report refers to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as an over-arching framework, but these do not have inter-governmental approval. The guiding principles for humanitarian assistance outlined in Section I of the annex of resolution 46/182, however, do have such approval. We therefore find it surprising that there is no mention of them in the report. The Economic and Social Council has this year again noted that Member States reaffirmed the importance and continuing validity of the framework provided by the guiding principles established in resolution 46/182. These are what should guide the Organization's work.

We have taken note of what the United Nations has done over the past year to harness information and communication technologies to advance the millennium development goals. We recognize, as does the last Human Development Report, that the belief that there is a technological bullet that can solve illiteracy, ill-health and economic failure reflects scant understanding of real poverty. A judicious blend of basic social, education and health services with the development of both brick and "click" industries is required for sustained human development and poverty reduction. Information and communication technology (ICT) is important in this context. Our own experience attests to this. We, therefore, strongly commend the Secretary-General on the establishment of the ICT Task Force. It can, in our view, play an invaluable role in bridging the digital divide, in fostering digital opportunity and in firmly placing ICT at the service of development for all.

On enhancing management in the Organization, we are heartened to note the Secretary-General's assertion that the United Nations is now equipped to operate more efficiently and effectively, and to make the best use of its financial and human resources.

But efficiency will not be able to make up for inadequacy of resources. We are therefore alarmed at the news from the Secretariat earlier last month at the extremely precarious financial situation and cross-borrowing from the peacekeeping account to pay salaries to staff members. We hope that the collective efforts put in by the membership of the United Nations late last year will be rewarded, and that the financial situation will improve in the next few months. We attach significance to this, as a country to which the Organization owes the largest amount of peacekeeping dues.

Lastly, while peacekeeping continues to be strengthened vigorously, including through the provision of additional post and non-post resources to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), we should, in this General Assembly, also strengthen departments that service economic and social sectors, where the biggest challenges to the international community lie.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to His Excellency Dr. Han Seung-soo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea, on his assumption of the office of President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. The Government of Japan will fully support President Han, who brings abundant experience and keen insight to this important office. I would also like to pay high tribute to His Excellency Mr. Harri Holkeri, former Prime Minister of the Republic of Finland, for his leadership as President of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. And on this occasion, I am pleased once again to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan on his reappointment as Secretary-General of the United Nations.

At the outset, I cannot but express my outrage at the series of terrorist attacks that occurred in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania on 11 September. On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to extend my most profound condolences to the victims who have left homes and families in many parts of the United States as well as in many other countries. My most sincere sympathy goes as well to the bereaved families, and indeed to all the people and the Government of the United States of America.

These acts of terror must be seen not only as assaults against the United States, but also as crimes against democracy and freedom, and more fundamentally, against humanity itself. The Member States of the United Nations must remain in strong solidarity with each other and committed to the words of Security Council resolution 1368 (2001) and General Assembly resolution 56/1 in cooperating to bring to justice those responsible for the heinous acts and to strengthen our fight against terrorism. In addition, it is our solemn responsibility to work towards the early adoption of the two remaining anti-terrorism conventions, namely, the comprehensive convention on international terrorism and the convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism.

As mentioned in the introduction of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, the Millennium Declaration adopted at the Millennium Summit clearly laid out the challenges and objectives for the international community in the twenty-first century. The road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which the Secretary-General presented last week, provides guidelines for achieving those objectives. I shall therefore present Japan's views on the challenges confronting the United Nations, focusing in particular on the issues referred to in the Declaration. I would also like to take this opportunity to request President Han to convene a meeting of the General Assembly to discuss the road map.

The terrorist attacks against the United States, which I touched upon earlier, pose a new and heightened threat to international peace and security. However, the world is not yet free from more traditional threats to international security. On the Korean peninsula, for example, the old military stand-off still remains, with serious implications not only for regional but also for global security. It is for this reason that the leadership of President Kim Dae-jung of the Republic of Korea, which resulted in the historic South-North summit meeting held in June last year, is of a global significance. In the same vein, it is encouraging that with the fifth South-North ministerial meeting, which took place from 15 to 18 September, genuine progress is being made in the dialogue and exchanges between the two parties on the Korean peninsula.

The Government of Japan will continue to support the tolerant policies of President Kim Dae-jung, which have generated this momentum. At the same time, while maintaining close cooperation with the Republic of Korea and the United States, Japan will remain steadfastly engaged in negotiations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with the aim of normalizing our diplomatic relations in such a way as to contribute to the peace and stability of North-East Asia.

In the Middle East, another hot spot with direct implications for global security, the vicious cycle of violence between Israel and Palestine has continued since last year. The ceasefire measures taken by both sides on 18 September are a welcome development, and we urge the parties concerned to get back on track to implement the Mitchell report in order to achieve genuine peace.

From Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Kosovo and East Timor, the United Nations is faced with a growing demand for peacekeeping. In view of the prospect of increased numbers and expanded scope of operations, the Japanese Government is now considering further strengthening its contributions to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Japan will also continue to lead efforts to enhance the safety and security of all personnel engaged in peace activities. Furthermore, recognizing that addressing the small arms issue is increasingly important in preventing the occurrence and the recurrence of conflicts, we are going to host an experts group meeting early next year with the aim of ensuring the steady implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Needless to say, it is imperative for us to maintain and strengthen the arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. In particular, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is an important pillar of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime based on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. That regime provides a set of realistic and concrete measures towards achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. With this recognition, the Government of Japan will make its utmost efforts in order to attain the early entry into force of the CTBT.

This year, Japan will again submit to the General Assembly a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament t[-hat will outline a concrete path towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to ask Member States to extend their support to our proposal, as they did last year.

I would also like to stress the importance of strengthening the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (BWC). The new threat of globally organized terrorism, which we have witnessed here in New York, makes our task all the more urgent. I therefore hope that Member States will engage in a constructive discussion at the Fifth Review Conference in order to make the BWC more effective in the coming years.

In addition to issues relating to peace and security, the international community is faced with a wide range of global issues, such as those relating to poverty, environmental degradation, refugees and displaced people, public health, narcotic drugs and so forth. While each one of them requires the cooperation of the international community, as the Millennium Declaration has stressed, two issues — global environmental degradation and HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases — demand our urgent attention.

Negotiations to ensure that the Kyoto Protocol will go into effect in 2002 are at a critical stage. While I assure the Assembly that the Japanese Government will spare no effort to attain that broadly shared goal of the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, we also believe that it is important for all States to follow the same rule as they implement measures to curb global warming. We therefore continue to seek the understanding and cooperation of all relevant countries, particularly the United States, in order to reach an agreement in time.

I would also like to stress here that it is important to adopt at the Johannesburg Summit guidelines on international environmental efforts in such areas as the utilization of scientific technologies and water issues, where additional measures are necessary.

Promoting international cooperation in combating the scourge of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases is yet another priority policy objective of Japan. On the occasion of the G-8 Summit meeting it hosted last year, the Japanese Government announced the Okinawa Infectious Disease Initiative, under which it will extend financial and technical assistance amounting to $3 billion over the next five years to help combat HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases in developing countries. More recently, Japan has committed itself to contributing $200 million to the Global AIDS and Health Fund.

We believe that in order to address the issue of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, it is important for the international community to develop a well-coordinated approach to respond to the needs of each country in a wide range of areas, including education, prevention, treatment, the establishment of sanitation systems and research and development.

In summary, what the Secretary-General refers to as the "war chest" will be essential to combat these deadly pandemics. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to make an appeal for increased support for the Global AIDS and Health Fund.

It is beyond debate that, unless the problems stemming from conflict and poverty in Africa are effectively addressed, there will be neither stability nor prosperity in the world in the twenty-first century. With this recognition, since 1993, the Government of Japan has been promoting the so-called TICAD process, the process launched by the Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II), with the aim of enhancing the ownership of the development process by the countries of Africa and their partnership with the international community. To further advance the process, in December of this year Japan will hold a ministerial meeting in Tokyo to prepare for a third TICAD summit, to be held within the next few years.

The Government of Japan welcomes the New African Initiative launched by African countries, which is indeed a strong manifestation of African countries' ownership of their own future. We look forward to having a substantive discussion at the forthcoming TICAD ministerial meeting on how the international community can best support this initiative.

Poverty, environmental destruction, infectious diseases and other issues that I have discussed are all global in scope and cannot be resolved by any one country alone. It is thus becoming increasingly important to address these issues through global cooperation. In this context, Japan advocates the importance of addressing these issues with a particular focus on human security, that is, protecting the lives and dignity of people. Human security is the basic requirement of humanity, no matter where people live.

It is our hope that the Trust Fund for Human Security, which the Japanese Government has established at the United Nations, will help advance a human-centred approach towards global issues in the years to come. We also look forward to the valuable contributions to be made by the International Commission on Human Security, co-chaired by Mrs. Sadako Ogata and Mr. Amartya Sen, which has commenced its work with the firm support of Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

The debates last year during the Millennium Summit and the Millennium Assembly clearly demonstrated that an overwhelming majority of United Nations Member States support Security Council reform, including the expansion of both its permanent and non-permanent membership. Although the need is urgent and the momentum strong, we have seen no real progress towards reform this year, the eighth year of our discussions.

We have to cooperate in order to move forward on this important issue. The statement made by President Holkeri on the closing day of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly is highly significant in this context. In that statement, President Holkeri offered three suggestions, namely, that the discussion be moved to a higher political level; that Governments may want to consider approaching the goal of a comprehensive reform in a focused way and by moving forward step by step; and that the question of the veto needs to be part of these discussions.

The Government of Japan believes that these suggestions merit our thorough consideration. We also consider it advisable for our future discussions on the question of the size of the expanded Council to be part of a focused step-by-step approach towards the attainment of a final reform package.

Before concluding, I would like to draw the attention of the Assembly to the two giant screens behind this rostrum, the high-definition cameras behind representatives' seats and the two projectors on either side of the balcony. As the Assembly may recall, last year, NHK, a Japanese public broadcasting corporation, installed this equipment on a temporary basis for the Millennium Summit and the general debate. Responding to the wishes of the Secretary-General and many Member States, NHK has generously agreed to lend the equipment to the United Nations on a permanent basis, free of charge. We all hope that this equipment will bring speakers and audience closer together, making our discussions more intimate and lively.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to congratulate the President of the General Assembly and the members of the Bureau on their election to their important posts at the helm of the Assembly for this session. I should like to express our thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General, and to pay tribute to him for his report, which is under consideration today.

The report of the Secretary-General is comprehensive, covering the activities of the United Nations over the past year. The report refers to many important issues, including the attainment of peace and security, the fulfilment of humanitarian commitments, cooperation for development, international law and order and human rights. We agree with the Secretary-General that the United Nations is trying to build a world based on justice and order. We also agree that this can be achieved only through respect for the rule of law in international affairs, as there is no other way to ensure that brute force will not prevail at the expense of the rule of law and the sovereignty and economic and political independence of States.

I should like to make several observations on the report insofar as it relates to Iraq. First, in paragraph 31 of the report, the Secretary-General expresses concern that, since December 1998, the United Nations has not been able to verify Iraq's compliance with Security Council resolutions regarding weapons of mass destruction. We would like to state that this conclusion does not reflect the reality of the situation or the true concerns of the United Nations with regard to Iraq, which should be focused on the complete lifting of the unjustifiable sanctions. There can be no justification for punishing an entire people. We had hoped that the Secretary-General would ask the Security Council to lift those inhumane sanctions, as the imposition of such sanctions is a practice of the Security Council that greatly detracts from the credibility of the United Nations and has transformed it into a tool of American foreign policy, which is hostile to Iraq.

Secondly, the Secretary-General has expressed concern about the halting of monitoring activities since 16 December 1998. However, he has not expressed any concern about the aggression unleashed against Iraq from 16 to 19 December 1998 by two permanent members of the Security Council, the United States and the United Kingdom. This aggression took many innocent civilian victims and destroyed numerous civilian installations and facilities, such as hospitals, desalination plants, schools and homes. The United Nations has not taken any measures against that blatant aggression — the State terrorism carried out by those two States.

On the other hand, several officials from the former United Nations Special Commission, as well as Commission documents, acknowledge that the Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency were used by the United States, the United Kingdom and the Zionist entity as a means of spying on Iraq. They also acknowledge that crises were staged to justify the continuous aggression against Iraq by those States, which falsified facts relating to earlier Iraqi programmes, even going so far as to use the Special Commission to contaminate remaining Iraqi warheads with VX chemicals.

Yet the United Nations — following American policy, which is inimical to Iraq — has not taken any measures to investigate this shameful exploitation of its work and mechanisms, nor has it taken any steps to bring justice to Iraq; to halt the use of United Nations mechanisms to harm it; or to punish those who are responsible for harming it.

Thirdly, all fair-minded States — including three of the permanent members of the Security Council — have stated that the file on the disarmament of Iraq has been closed, and that the time has come to implement paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), on the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and paragraph 22, on the lifting of the sanctions against Iraq. Those two paragraphs have not yet been implemented. Instead, the United States and Britain have left no stone unturned in the process of rewriting Security Council resolutions, through, for example, the adoption of resolution 1284 (1999), whose very authors recognized its inapplicability and which itself was not a solution. That resolution, in effect, was stillborn.

An attempt was made to bring about the adoption of a resolution on so-called smart sanctions, which are actually intended to tighten sanctions against Iraq and to exempt the Security Council from fulfilling its obligations to Iraq — obligations that are set out in its own resolutions, in particular resolution 661 (1990) and resolution 687 (1991).

Fourthly, since 1991 the United States and Britain have imposed no-fly zones on Iraq through a unilateral resolution and have used military power to enforce them. They attack Iraqi civilian installations and homes on a daily basis, and they have carried out widespread military aggression five times since 1991. This unilateral use of force is a continuous, flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations.

However, once again, the United Nations has taken no steps to put an end to it, despite the fact that the Secretary-General on more than one occasion has stated that there is no basis in the relevant Security Council resolutions for the imposition of no-fly zones in Iraq.

With regard to the question of missing persons, the Secretary-General has called for Iraq's cooperation with a "high-level coordinator" to return all Kuwaiti nationals and nationals of third States to their homeland. We regret that the report of the Secretary-General has ignored the numerous Iraqi initiatives to resolve the question of the Iraqi, Saudi, Kuwaiti and other missing persons, the most recent of which was the letter (S/2001/804) sent by the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the Secretary-General on 16 August 2001, in which Iraq expressed the wish to resume the work of the Tripartite Commission on missing persons, under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and with the participation of those States that hold files of missing persons.

The report of the Secretary-General has also overlooked Iraq's initiative to address the question of Iraqi, Saudi and Kuwaiti missing persons in a direct bilateral framework or in the framework of the League of Arab States in coordination with the ICRC.

A coordinator has been appointed to ascertain the fate of Kuwaiti and Saudi missing persons, but the situation of Iraqi missing persons is being ignored, despite the fact that their number is double that of the other two groups combined. This is a blatant example of the double standard used in Security Council resolutions vis-à-vis Iraq, even in cases of humanitarian nature.

The question of missing persons is a humanitarian one and requires cooperation on the part of us all to ascertain their fate, regardless of their nationality. Yet resolution 1284 (1999), which was stillborn, overlooked that fact and dealt only with Kuwaiti missing persons, disregarding those from Iraq, even though international mechanisms, established by the Geneva Conventions of 1949, exist to deal with this humanitarian issue.

Fifthly, the report referred to the Secretary-General's preparedness to resume dialogue with Iraq. We would like to recall that it was Iraq that proposed that a dialogue with the Secretary-General be initiated. The first round was held in February 2001, and it was agreed that the second round would be held the following month. However, the Secretary-General called for the postponing of that dialogue and, on 23 July 2001, declared that the second round of the dialogue would be held once the Security Council had finalized its deliberations. He also said that beginning another round of dialogue would have adverse consequences at a time when the Council was attempting to determine which direction to take.

For our part, we believe that dialogue with the Secretary-General must not be linked to political pressures brought to bear in the Security Council — pressures that have prevented the Council from fulfilling its commitments to Iraq. This is because of the American threat of the use of the veto against any draft resolution aimed at restoring Iraq's rights, in accordance with the resolutions of the Security Council itself. In this connection, I should like to recall here the responsibilities of the Secretary-General under Article 99 of the Charter.

Sixth, the Secretary-General, in paragraph 109 of the report, refers to the "oil-for-food" programme. In this connection, we would like to make the following comments.

First, the Secretary-General states that the Government of Iraq's delays in contracting humanitarian supplies and equipment are of great concern. Regrettably, that reference is inaccurate. Despite the tremendous difficulties and complex bureaucratic mechanisms surrounding the contracting process, beginning with the dispatch of tenders to firms and ending with the dispatch of those contracts to the Committee established under Security Council resolution 661 (1990), the Iraqi side has signed all the allocations for all the various sectors, at all stages of the process. Indeed, the Office of the Iraq Programme warned recently that some of the contracts actually exceed their allocations.

This is at a time when the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding and the "oil-for-food" programme is experiencing continuous obstacles from the United States and Britain as contracts worth more than $4 billion are put on hold. These are humanitarian contracts. More than $2 billion in contracts have been hindered by the Office of the Iraq Programme, under the pretext of review. This is in addition to the subversive role played by the representatives of the United States and Britain in the sanctions committee established under Security Council resolution 661 (1990) with regard to the implementation of the different aspects of the Memorandum of Understanding. They have objected to expanding the "green lists", they have impeded the adoption of oil pricing and cash earmarked for improving the oil sector, and lately they have tried to use this programme to collect information about Iraq and to threaten its security and safety.

In this connection, we would like to refer to paragraph 56 of the Secretary-General's note, entitled "The right to food", document A/56/210, which states,

> "With regard to the principle that food should not be used as an instrument of political and economic pressure, the case of Iraq is important. There can be little doubt that subjecting the Iraqi people to a harsh economic embargo since 1991 has placed the United Nations in a clear violation of the obligation to respect the right to food of people in Iraq. This is the opinion of, among others, Denis Halliday, a former Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and former Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, and of Marc Bossuyt, in his working paper on the adverse consequences of economic sanctions on the enjoyment of human rights, submitted to the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in 2000."

This behaviour and these policies mar the role of the United Nations in Iraq. The international Organization and its Secretariat must, therefore, adopt an equitable and impartial position towards Iraq. The continuation of this situation victimizes innocent civilians in Iraq. United Nations sanctions have killed more than 1.5 million Iraqi citizens. The situation substantially diminishes the credibility of the United Nations and its role, as specified in the Charter. It also creates a dangerous precedent by allowing the use of food as a means of social and economic pressure, and by ignoring continuous aggression over a 10-year period against an independent State and a founding Member of the United Nations.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to the fact that States are not allowed to exaggerate or distort the Secretary-General's report to serve their own interests. This is what the representative of Kuwait did when he claimed that the Secretary-General in his latest report has held the Iraqi Government responsible for lack of progress and for delays in lifting sanctions against Iraq. This is not contained in the report. The representative of Kuwait used the report of the Secretary-General to offend my country. This happens at a time when the representative of Kuwait and his Government should be governed by logic and not participate in daily aggressions against Iraq, and not allow its territory to be used by American and British aircraft to bomb Iraqi civilians. Kuwait could have accepted Iraq's offer to peacefully resolve the question of Iraqi and Kuwaiti missing persons through the Arab League. That is logic itself.

In conclusion, my delegation is of the view that the United Nations must pay due attention to the question of Palestine because of its direct and serious impact on international peace and security. Regrettably, the report of the Secretary-General does not reflect this matter in accordance with the provisions of the Charter. The report does not refer to the long-standing atrocious terrorist practices carried out by the Zionist entity against the defenceless Palestinian people. Similarly, the report does not refer to the Security Council's failure to provide international protection for the Palestinian people.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): First of all, I would like to congratulate the President on his election. Norway stands ready to cooperate fully with him as he carries out his important responsibilities.

I would like to commend the Secretary-General for his excellent report on the work of the Organization.

At the outset of the report, the Secretary-General states that the United Nations, during the past year, has witnessed striking contrasts on the international scene, both encouraging developments and dangerous threats. On 11 September, we witnessed acts of heinous terrorism here in our host country. Those who lost their lives or were injured on that fateful day will always live in our memories.

The Secretary-General has underlined the need to make prevention the focal point of this Organization. The Security Council has joined in these efforts, and its President issued a statement on 20 February saying, "a well planned and coordinated peace-building strategy can play a significant role in conflict prevention" (*S/PRST/2001/5*).

Norway strongly endorses this approach to international peace-building, realizing that the world needs to examine the underlying causes of conflicts in order to build a lasting peace. Fighting poverty, underdevelopment and environmental degradation must be at the top of our agenda. The world must also be willing to meet its humanitarian commitments.

In his report, the Secretary-General states that the turn of the millennium, sadly enough, has not been accompanied by a reduction in the suffering caused by natural disasters and complex emergencies throughout the world. Vulnerable civilian populations continue to be deliberate targets of violence. The report refers to the conflicts that have continued in Afghanistan, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and Sudan, while crises have escalated or erupted in, for example, Burundi, Indonesia, Liberia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

As in earlier reports, the Secretary-General deals extensively with the situation in Africa. As outlined by the Secretary-General, the United Nations is involved in a large number of development programmes and other activities in Africa. We agree with the Secretary-General that Africa's problems must remain of the highest priority to the Organization.

Norway continues to be gravely concerned over the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which the Secretary-General calls a catastrophe of global proportions. By late 2000, over 36 million adults and children were living with HIV/AIDS, while 22 million had died of the virus. We share the Secretary-General's concern that this is resulting in the destruction of the social fabric in the most affected countries, reversing years of declining death rates.

Africa is the continent most affected by the spread of HIV/AIDS. In sub-Saharan Africa the epidemic is now the leading cause of death. There has also been a rapid increase in HIV infections in Eastern Europe and South and East Asia. The overall situation is of the greatest concern to us all.

On 11 September the world witnessed horrifying terrorist attacks here in the United States. The attacks were not merely aimed at the American Government; they were also aimed at hurting and weakening the democratic world as a whole. The world needs to stand united in the fight against terrorism. Both the General Assembly and the Security Council acted with urgency and determination after the terrorist attacks of 11 September. More needs to be done. Norway therefore looks forward to the discussion on this issue here in the General Assembly on 1 October.

A natural focal point in the United Nations in the continuation of this process is to give even higher priority to the development and strengthening of the international legal order. In the work of preventing further atrocities like the attacks of 11 September, it is of the utmost importance that the international community is able to identify and hold accountable those responsible.

Norway notes, and shares, the Secretary-General's optimism regarding the ratification process for the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court. The International Criminal Court has the potential to become a vital instrument of international law and justice, and Norway welcomes its early establishment.

In the first chapter of his report, the Secretary-General gives a broad description of the work done by the United Nations around the world in its peace-building efforts. The elections recently held in East Timor are among the many successes in those long-term efforts. Nonetheless, the situation elsewhere — and especially in the Middle East — raises serious concern. The Secretary-General describes the situation in the region as the worst crisis since the signing of the Oslo Agreement in 1993.

The outbreak of violence in occupied Palestinian territory and in Israel since late September 2000 has brought extensive loss of life on both sides. Norway fully supports the Secretary-General in his decision to devote much of his time to addressing this particular crisis, and encourages him to continue his efforts in that respect.

Finally, we appreciate the Secretary-General's continued efforts in pursuing management reform within the United Nations. It is crucial for the Organization to be able to address the shifting and challenging tasks that lie ahead, and to do so in an effective manner. In saying that, I should add that we are impressed by the Secretary-General's tireless efforts in streamlining the United Nations system.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): We, too, commend the Secretary-General on his report.

We also take this opportunity to again extend Australia's condolences to those who suffered as a result of the attacks in this city on 11 September.

The international environment has undergone a fundamental, paradigm shift in the two weeks since 11 September. Member States of the United Nations, and the Organization as a whole, now face unprecedented and demanding challenges. This fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly will be like no other before it. There is an immediate need to reassess our priorities and to refocus our energies in order to maintain and improve the United Nations capacity to find constructive solutions to urgent global issues.

Australia joined with other nations in condemning the outrageous and cowardly terrorist attacks in this city and Washington earlier this month. We believe strongly that Article 51 of the United Nations Charter and Security Council resolution 1368 (2001), of 12 September, give the necessary legal authority to respond to those acts, including through the use of armed force.

For the first time ever, we in Australia have invoked the Security Treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States (ANZUS), and stand ready to support the United States and other allies in taking whatever steps are judged necessary to bring the perpetrators of this and other acts of international terrorism to justice.

The fight against terrorism requires international cooperation. The international community has expressed its opposition to terrorism many times, perhaps most notably in the United Nations Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, which states the "unequivocal condemnation" by all States Members of the United Nations

> "of all acts, methods and practices of terrorism, as criminal and unjustifiable" (*resolution 49/60, annex, para. 1*).

As important as those words are, they are not sufficient. Despite universal condemnation of terrorism, some States appear to have maintained their links with terrorist groups, and a few are still willing to offer sanctuary to terrorist leaders. This is unacceptable and cannot continue. Australia calls on all States to sever those links and to join the fight in deed as well as in word.

Existing instruments and institutions provide a sound starting point for strengthened international cooperation. We note paragraph 224 of the Secretary-General's report, which welcomes the ratifications of and accessions to the 12 existing global conventions for the suppression and elimination of international terrorism, and notes the continuing work towards a comprehensive convention against terrorism. Australia is already a party to 9 of the 12 existing conventions, and is actively considering becoming a party to the remaining instruments. We consider that a concerted effort must be made to conclude the negotiations on a comprehensive convention against terrorism at the forthcoming session of the working group in order to strengthen the international regime. Australia will give its full support to that objective.

Australia stands ready to support all efforts to bring perpetrators of terrorist acts to justice. We urge the United Nations as a whole to attach the highest priority to this issue at the current session and beyond.

As the Secretary-General has stated, one of the strengths of the United Nations system is its capacity to adjust to changing international conditions. He has rightly observed that the Organization can remain effective only if it preserves that tradition of innovation. Nowhere is this more strongly illustrated than in the United Nations role in East Timor.

Two years ago, the Security Council entrusted the United Nations with comprehensive responsibility for managing and supporting East Timor's transition to a stable, viable and democratic State governed by an effective administration. With the support of the international community, the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) has made significant progress towards fulfilling that mandate, including through the progressive transfer of government responsibilities to the East Timorese. The election on 30 August of a Constituent Assembly and the swearing in of the new transitional Government on 20 September were further critical milestones in that process.

To date, East Timor has been a success story for the United Nations, but the Organization's role is not yet complete. Australia fully endorses the Secretary-General's judgement in his report that East Timor will require a substantial international presence after independence if the transition to an effective democratic administration is to be completed. We fully share the Secretary-General's view that this international presence should be provided through an integrated United Nations mission comprising civilian, civilian police and peacekeeping components under a single Security Council mandate and funded from United Nations assessed contributions.

That is the most coherent and practical approach that can be taken to handle the tasks and challenges that still lie ahead. Its implementation will require the United Nations as a whole to take further innovative and creative approaches to East Timor, notably in the matter of resources. It would be tragic to jeopardize a longer-term peaceful and sustainable outcome for East Timor, and to waste the significant investment the international community has made so far, by failing to provide adequate support after independence.

The credibility of the United Nations as the caretaker of East Timor's transition is at stake. The Organization and all of its Members have a responsibility to protect that credibility, including through sensible but creative decisions on critical issues about the future United Nations presence in the coming months. Australia will do all it can to support such decisions.

Finally, I turn to another urgent global issue to which the United Nations will need increasingly to apply a constructive, innovative and flexible approach. That is the issue of people-smuggling, and, although it is not specifically addressed in this report of the Secretary-General, we hope it will attract increased attention in the future. This is a growing area of transnational criminal activity that trades on people's hopes and fears and exploits existing international agreements that were designed for humanitarian purposes.

People-smuggling is an issue of particular importance in Australia, but it is also of increasing global concern. It is a problem that is beyond the ability of any country or organization to solve unilaterally. As such it must be addressed nationally, regionally and globally. A coordinated international approach is required both at the source of the problem — where many factors cause people to leave and, in many cases, to flee their homes — and in transit and destination countries that facilitate smuggling operations. We need also to examine existing international conventions and norms to ensure that they do not inadvertently create opportunities for people-smugglers.

The United Nations has an important and increasing role to play in dealing with critical elements of that new and disturbing situation, including through a renewed focus and more coordinated response to the criminal gangs that prey on people's hopes and fears.

Australia also supports efforts to address the problem of outflow at its source. Accordingly, we welcome the joint initiative by Mr. Lubbers, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to convene a forum on Afghan refugees following the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to be held in Geneva early next month. For our part, in addition to Australia's considerable national and regional efforts to address the issue of people-smuggling, we strongly encourage a renewed and more coordinated focus on the issue by the United Nations as a whole and by UNHCR in particular.

Mr. de Ruyt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I make this statement on behalf of the European Union. The associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries of Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, align themselves with this statement.

Allow me, first of all, to congratulate the President and the members of the Bureau on their elections, and to wish them every success in their tasks.

The President has already demonstrated, in the first two weeks of the fifty-sixth session, remarkable efficiency and speed of action in the face of the tragic events that upset the plans he had drawn up for the next few months.

The entire world agrees that the terrorist attacks of 11 September marked a turning point in the history of our times. The world has changed and nothing will ever be exactly the same again. The challenge before us is one of global proportions. The solidarity we have shown towards the United States must also be shown in the fight we shall have to wage against terrorism. For my country and the members of the European Union — and, I believe, for the great majority of States represented here — it is now clear that that the United Nations will have to play an essential role in that fight and that, in the weeks and months to come, our energies will have to be focused on the consequences of those unspeakable acts of aggression.

As the heads of State and Government of the European Union stated on the occasion of their extraordinary Council session last Friday, the attacks of 11 September are an assault on our open, democratic, tolerant and multicultural societies, and are a challenge to the conscience of every human being. The European Council considered that, on the basis of Security Council resolution 1368 (2001), a response by the United States was legitimate. It also decided that the Union would cooperate with the United States to bring to justice and punish the perpetrators, sponsors and accomplices of those barbaric acts.

The member States of the European Union are prepared to undertake such action according to their individual means. Those actions must be targeted and could be directed against States abetting, supporting or harbouring terrorists. Our commitment is therefore unambiguous, as should be that of the entire international community in the face of actions for which no justification is acceptable.

As this meeting has replaced the general debate, which should have taken place this week, allow me, in the name of the European Union, to extend my sincere condolences to the representative of the Government of the United States, as well as to the many who have been directly or indirectly affected by this tragedy. I would also like to extend my condolences to the representatives of States whose citizens are among the victims. Those of us who by virtue of our profession are New Yorkers by adoption will for a long time remain traumatized by the events that took place two weeks ago. That emotion should help us to respond strongly and with unity to the desire of our Governments that the United Nations should play a prominent role in the struggle against terrorism.

Like many leaders throughout the world, the heads of State and Government of the European Union, at their meeting last Friday, called on us to set up, under the aegis of the United Nations, the largest possible global coalition against this scourge. The primary responsibility lies, without any doubt, with the Security Council, which last week adopted a very strong resolution, but since the call is addressed to all States, it is essential that we also act in our Assembly.

As I said earlier, the response to the terrorist threat can only be global and multilateral, and it is in that spirit that the European Union has requested that a substantial debate on the fight against international terrorism take place in the Assembly beginning next week. We sincerely wish to thank the President and, through him, all the Member States of the United Nations that have unanimously accepted this proposal. I call upon everyone to prepare carefully for that debate, which will itself help to prepare for the general debate in November, which we would also like to see focused on this subject.

The current debate on the report on the work of the Organization gives us an opportunity to speak on the activities of the United Nations during the past year, but it also allows us to state our views on what should be the priorities for its future activities. We are pleased that the President inscribed this item as the first of the plenary session of the General Assembly.

Clearly, the first priority is the Millennium Declaration and the road map that has just been presented to us for implementation. The clear and precise aims solemnly reaffirmed by our heads of State and Government at the Millennium Summit should be pursued with perseverance, in particular those regarding the maintenance of peace and security, development, poverty eradication, and respect for human rights, for democracy and for good governance.

With that road map, we now have at our disposal an instrument that is both analytical and operational, one that will guide most of the work carried out under the aegis of the Assembly. We can accept the document as it is, but that does not mean that we entirely agree with every aspect. However, it is an indispensable tool for maintaining unity of action and the spirit of the Millennium Declaration. We therefore call for it to be used to the full.

The European Union, just like the Secretary-General in the report before us, is deeply concerned by the persistence of humanitarian crises in several regions of the world. Civilian populations continue to be the first victims of armed conflict and to bear the heaviest burden. Together with the Secretary-General, the European Union is outraged at, and concerned about, acts of violence carried out against humanitarian personnel, and therefore supports the process under way in the United Nations to reinforce the safety of humanitarian personnel. It calls upon all Member States and actors involved to respond to the Secretary-General's appeal for a return to a culture of protection for civilians. It also welcomes the work undertaken by inter-organizational networks aimed at improving the situation of internally displaced persons.

As the Assembly is aware, the European Union also places particular importance on the defence and promotion of human rights. It welcomes the reinforcement of the partnership between the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other parts of the United Nations system. This has enabled humanitarian and peacekeeping operations to be more aware of human rights violations. We welcome the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the signature of the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Finally, we heartily encourage the process of gender mainstreaming under way in the United Nations system.

In response to the Secretary-General's appeal, the European Union is committed to maintaining the political momentum in defence of the rights of the child on the occasion of the next special session on children.

With regard to the Durban Conference against Racism, the European Union played an important role and is proud to have contributed, after long and difficult debate, to the success of the Conference — something that was essential given the hopes raised among those who today still suffer from the effects of long-standing racist attitudes or who are still subject to racial discrimination in their daily lives.

Development, sustainable development, the fight against poverty and specific action to benefit the least developed countries remain, as indicated in the report, priority objectives of our Organization. We welcome the efforts made in the past year. We were particularly pleased with the success of the special session of the General Assembly on AIDS, which put the fight against this scourge at the forefront of our concerns, both at the level of States and at the levels of private industry and the medical community.

The European Union was particularly active in the preparations for, and holding of, the conference on the least developed countries, which took place in Brussels in May this year. We are therefore particularly interested in the follow-up to the decisions taken at that conference, particularly in the area of trade liberalization. We also attach particular importance to the preparations for the Conference on Financing for Development. In that respect, we would like to draw the attention of partners to the substantial efforts that are still necessary to identify priority areas of action where progress could be made in Monterrey, and to mobilize the attention and political will of our Governments.

I would like to conclude by recalling the remarkable progress made by the United Nations in the year under review to improve the efficiency of the Organization in the areas of peacekeeping and crisis management.

The Brahimi report served as the launch pad for our work, whose results, although not entirely meeting our expectations, will make it possible for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to respond better to the challenges before it, challenges whose scope continues to surpass our collective means. But the United Nations has also done good work in the field in the past year. Among other things, I wish to mention the restoring of the difficult operation in Sierra Leone, the success of the operations in East Timor, Ethiopia and Eritrea and, finally, the long-awaited launch of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), an operation closely followed by the European Union.

The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has substantially improved over recent months. We hope that the Congolese parties will be able to sustain the momentum of the Gaborone meeting, and that the signatories to the Lusaka Agreement will commit themselves to solving through dialogue the problems standing in the way of the full implementation of the commitments undertaken.

The United Nations, with the European Union, the United States and other actors, bears a large responsibility in the actions of the international community to restore peace in the Balkans. Cooperation between international organizations functioned well throughout the past year. It was intended, among other things, to help the Republic of Yugoslavia to manage the post-Milosevic era. Above all, it enabled us to contain the growing crisis in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which threatened to destroy all the efforts to maintain multi-ethnicity as a basic tenet, together with respect for borders and regional cooperation, on which the future of this still too unstable region must be built.

The elections to take place soon in Kosovo are a new and difficult step on the road that should lead all countries in the region towards the European Union. We have full confidence in the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), which to date has carried out its task in a remarkably balanced and determined way to help the inhabitants of that territory to learn to live together on the basis of democratic institutions.

Beyond what I have mentioned, there remain worrying trouble spots in the world where, for various reasons, our Organization is less present. I am thinking, for example, of Burundi, West Africa and, of course, the Middle East, where the attention of the entire international community remains focused even after the events of 11 September.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, beyond the suffering it brings to the civilian populations, also weighs heavily on the stability of the region. We strongly encourage the parties to seize the opportunity before them today to rejoin the path of peace through direct dialogue on the implementation of the recommendations of the Fact-Finding Committee, which should allow the earliest possible resumption of negotiations on the final status of the occupied territories.

Most of the problems mentioned in the Secretary-General's report continue to mobilize our Organization's efforts. We should give him the means to carry out his task effectively, which involves not only fighting against waste and bad management, but also making available adequate financial resources.

The events of 11 September affected us all deeply. They should now cause us to close ranks, to develop deeper solidarity, and to have more recourse to multilateralism to meet not only the challenge of international terrorism, but also all the challenges born of the growing globalization of international relations. The European Union will actively contribute to meeting the major challenges before us and to develop its solidarity in all aspects of United Nations action.

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): These are not propitious times. Since yesterday, when the debate began on the work of the Organization, the tragic events of 11 September have coloured our deliberations, and quite rightly so, given that over 60 countries have their nationals on the missing list as a consequence of the attack on, and the subsequent collapse of, the World Trade Center towers. Our host has suffered immeasurably. On behalf of my delegation, I send heartfelt sympathy and sincere condolences to all the families who have lost their dear ones, and to the Government and people of the United States of America. Our hearts go out to them and our prayers are with all of them.

Allow me to express our sincere congratulations to the President on his election to his high position. He can count on my delegation's support and cooperation.

Tanzania wishes to commend Secretary-General Kofi Annan for the manner in which he has presented the report on the work of the Organization. The report reviews the efforts of the Organization in terms of finding constructive solutions to the fundamental problems of our time, and with a sober recognition of the complexities of the tasks facing the Organization, and, more important, it attempts to underline the enduring significance of the United Nations as an instrument of global cooperation for the common good.

Many delegations have made some commendable contributions and raised some very interesting and pertinent concerns, whose perspectives we share. On the other hand, we agree with the Secretary-General's contention that

> "One of the United Nations strengths is its capacity to adjust to changing international conditions ... We must prepare for the possibilities of the future and meet the new

> demands made on the United Nations." (*A/56/1, para. 3*)

However, we wish to specifically underscore some of our own concerns, one of which is Africa's challenge of protecting and assisting refugees. As is widely known, Tanzania has over the years continued to be host to thousands of refugees from neighbouring countries. Their presence in the country creates an additional, heavy financial burden for my country, to say nothing of the security concerns, environmental degradation, and theft and violence perpetrated against our people. Anybody reading paragraph 115 of the report might conclude that Tanzania is hosting only around 100,000 refugees. The truth of the matter is that we are currently hosting over 500,000 from Burundi, over 170,000 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and over 10,000 from Rwanda. The point that my delegation would like to make is that there is an urgent need to ascertain the correct number of refugees worldwide and to recognize the tremendous burden on host countries.

My Government is very appreciative of the assistance it receives from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other non-governmental organizations, as well as other Governments. The needs of refugees are great, but those of the nationals in the regions hosting them are even greater. It is therefore important that the question of refugees should receive serious attention from the international community. A piecemeal approach, while offering temporary respite, does not address the really critical questions.

Let me turn to my dear continent, Africa. The report of the Secretary-General devotes 12 paragraphs to Africa. I wish here to emphasize that now that African leaders have adopted the New African Initiative as the beacon of a continental strategy for development, and bearing in mind the appeal of world leaders in the Millennium Declaration of September 2000 for support for Africa, the stage is now set for meaningful cooperation. Africa is determined to be the master of its own development. It is incumbent upon the international community and the United Nations to form a new partnership that will speed up the development engine. Africa needs additional resources and technology.

The issues of conflict prevention, peacemaking and peace-building are very important to the African continent, where civil wars and conflicts have continued to be the order of the day in many countries. We are happy that the Secretary-General devoted a good portion of his report to discussing this important issue. Indeed, we share the Secretary-General's view that

> "While comprehensive and coherent conflict prevention strategies offer the greatest potential for promoting lasting peace, they have never been easy to formulate or to implement." (*ibid., para. 20*)

Nonetheless, it is my delegation's hope that all the agreements that have been concluded after very painstaking negotiations will be adhered to by all concerned. We owe it to the peoples affected to give peace a chance.

The Secretary-General's report touches on the thorny issue of poverty. In paragraph 129 we are made to understand that the international community resolved to wage war on poverty by launching a sustained campaign to make the right to development a reality for everyone. The Millennium Declaration raised the expectations of over 1 billion people living on less than $1 per day. Concrete programmes and actions need to be worked out as a matter of urgency.

But, as the report goes on to underline, if the international community is to meet its goals of development and poverty eradication, economic growth in developing economies must accelerate. Again, while we recognize that the challenge is primarily ours, international support is critical in our common fight against poverty. This will entail, among other things, forging partnerships with other members of the international community. Africa and the least developed countries will continue to bank on the steadfast support and understanding of the developed countries until our countries have attained the level of self-reliance necessary to enable them to make significant contributions on their own.

In conclusion, allow me to make some brief remarks about the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which continues to be, as the Secretary-General correctly put it in paragraph 146 of his report, "a catastrophe of global proportions". While it is true that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is a global problem, Africa is the continent most profoundly affected by it. More than 25.3 million people are living with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan

Africa, thus making it the leading cause of death in that part of the globe.

Given its limited capacity, Africa cannot afford to be left on its own in the fight against HIV/AIDS. In other words, in order to be able to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS by the year 2015, as the world leaders resolved to undertake at the Millennium Summit had resolved to undertake to do, Africa must be assisted in terms of building its capacity to tackle the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and of other infectious diseases associated with it. We wish to commend the efforts deployed by the United Nations in terms of pursuing various initiatives aimed at assisting Governments in defeating this scourge. We also wish to commend and express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for the continued system-wide efforts to address the various aspects of the HIV/AIDS crisis.

The Secretary-General's report shows that a lot has been achieved and that a great deal more remains to be done. The goals have been set, and the direction is clear. It is our considered view that, without adequate follow-up mechanisms, many of the goals will remain pure rhetoric. Let us resolve to move to the next level.

Mr. Kerim (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): Since this is the first time that I am taking the floor during this session of the General Assembly, allow me to congratulate Mr Han on his assumption of the presidency of the fifty-sixth session. My delegation is confident that under his skilful guidance, we will bring this challenging session of the General Assembly to a successful conclusion. Let me assure him also of my delegation's full support. My congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau.

I would like also to avail myself of this opportunity to pay tribute to the Secretary-General upon his re-election. The report we are discussing is further proof that the right decision has been made.

In the wake of the tragic events of 11 September, our debate cannot be regarded as business as usual. I would rather call it an hour of trial. Once again we are confronted with the sad truth and a bitter comprehension of the dark side of human nature. The perpetrators of this odious crime were blinded by hatred. We, for our part, must always keep our eyes wide open and not allow our conscience to be awakened only on occasion. Therefore, it is necessary to scrutinize the consequences of international terrorism and to undertake appropriate measures in both the short and long run.

Let me express, on behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Macedonia, our deepest sympathy to the families and friends of all the innocent victims of those barbaric terrorist attacks and convey our full solidarity and support to the Government of the United States and the American people.

This merciless carnage and senseless destruction was, at the same time, an attack against the fundamental values of our Organization and what it stands for — that is, democracy, freedom, tolerance and humanity. My country, the Republic of Macedonia, will work closely with the United States, the European Union and all partners to combat international terrorism. All international organizations, particularly the United Nations, must be engaged in the forefront of this struggle.

I should now like to come back to the actual topic of our discussion today, the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. In our view, the Secretary-General's report and the road map towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration should be considered as a whole. The Secretary-General deserves special acknowledgement for taking an approach which makes the report less of a review and more of a forward-looking document. The report is comprehensive and coherent, and it provides an opportunity to devote special attention to the issues we consider as being of utmost priority for the work of the Organization.

It goes without saying that the role of the United Nations, and that of the Security Council in particular, in the maintenance of international peace and security remains of paramount importance. In our increasingly globalized world, none of the crucial issues we are dealing with, in particular those related to peace and security, can be resolved solely within a national framework. As rightly pointed out in the road map, there is a need for concerted action against international terrorism. This can be accomplished, in our view, by not only signing and ratifying all of the relevant international conventions and by completing work on the remaining texts that are being drafted, but also by setting up an international anti-terrorism network that will operate worldwide.

My delegation supports the efforts to strengthen the capacities of the United Nations peacekeeping operations and to improve coordination within the United Nations system, as recommended in the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. The focus should be on conflict prevention. The Republic of Macedonia, as the host of the first preventive mission in United Nations history, is ready to share its positive experience to that effect.

Furthermore, let me stress the need for enhanced institutional cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, as set out in the Millennium Declaration, to cope with the emerging challenges in different parts of the world. While recognizing the fact that the Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, we believe that the United Nations in general can only benefit from strengthening institutionalized cooperation with the relevant regional and subregional organizations.

We agree with the view of the Secretary-General that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the Programme of Action that was adopted there represent a significant first step at the global level towards the goal of preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. However, we deem that there is a need for an enhanced follow-up process. The problem of small arms and their proliferation has been of particular concern to the Republic of Macedonia and the broader region, especially after the civil unrest in Albania and the conflict in Kosovo. This poses a serious threat not only to the security and stability of my country, but also to the broader region. Therefore, it is necessary to take strong action to combat the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons.

In terms of priorities, enhancing the capacities of the United Nations in mobilizing resources for development and poverty eradication deserves our special attention. In this regard, my delegation has high expectations that the preparation process leading to the Financing for Development Conference in Monterrey in March 2002 will have a positive outcome and will address the specific concerns of countries with economies in transition.

There is a need to build stronger partnerships with other relevant organizations beyond the United Nations system, such as the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the business community, non-governmental organizations and others, in order to have them closely engaged in the process. The fact that every fourth Member State of our Organization is classified as a least developed country is certainly no credit to us all. That is why this issue has to be given the highest priority. We also look forward to the upcoming Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held next year in Johannesburg, South Africa, to review the progress in the implementation of Agenda 21.

Finally, allow me to make a few comments on the parts of the report related to my country, the Republic of Macedonia. At the very outset of the crisis, the Republic of Macedonia approached the United Nations, asking for close cooperation in order to prevent spillover effects from the immediate neighbourhood and to secure the northern border of Macedonia from the Kosovo side, and recalling the need for full implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). The Security Council and Secretary-General responded in a timely manner, and resolution 1345 (2001) was adopted. Within this context, we deem it to be of crucial importance to emphasize the role of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR) in combating organized crime and terrorist activities originating from Kosovo.

The Framework Agreement, aimed at overcoming the serious political and security crisis in the Republic of Macedonia, envisages an active role for the international community in facilitating, monitoring and assisting in its implementation. Within this context, it is necessary to ensure the return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes within the shortest possible time frame. In that regard, we highly value the continuous assistance that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are providing.

The lessons that have to be drawn from the situation in the Republic of Macedonia are as follows: Macedonia's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be preserved; there are no territorial solutions to ethnic issues; the use of violence in the pursuit of political aims should be rejected completely; the multi-ethnic character of society must be preserved. These principles, in our view, should serve as the basis for the assessments and activities of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council and the Secretary-General in their future activities, in a spirit of close cooperation with the Macedonian authorities.

In conclusion, once again I would like to assure the Secretary-General of my delegation's full support in his endeavours to strengthen the role and relevance of our Organization in the forthcoming period.

Mr. Nguyen Thanh Chau (Viet Nam): I should like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his comprehensive and insightful annual report on the work of the United Nations and for his important statement to begin our discussion of this agenda item.

My delegation is very grateful that the Secretary-General's annual report contains a thorough review of the efforts of the United Nations, which has been done in order to identify sustainable and workable solutions to the many challenges that confront humanity as a whole. In light of the complexities of the challenges, we also commend the Secretary-General for the programme of work he proposed in his report (A/56/326) to the General Assembly entitled "Road map towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration". My delegation will give its comments on that report when the Assembly considers it later this year.

The report clearly shows that, in our increasingly globalized world of today, the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of sustainable development and social justice are closely linked, and that the critical issues we are facing cannot be resolved solely within a national framework. We fully support the Secretary-General's view that development cooperation is a solid foundation on which to build stability and economic and social development. We further add that the United Nations is the most suitable instrument to galvanize the common efforts of nations in this task.

I wish to underline that my country fully supports the essential role of the United Nations in the maintenance of world peace and security. We welcome the focus of the United Nations on conflict prevention and peace-building, and emphasize that the United Nations should make greater efforts to address the root causes of conflicts in a comprehensive and consistent manner. It is true that in peacekeeping and peace-building central priority should be given to conflict prevention, as it would be much more costly and harder to settle conflicts once they have occurred. We note with satisfaction that a good number of steps have been taken by the United Nations in this direction.

The report also touches upon the question of sanctions, underscoring that they should not precipitate humanitarian distress that undermines the viability of the policy and of the instrument itself. The report also highlights the adverse effects of such regimes on innocent populations and third parties. Viet Nam strongly believes that sanctions are blunt instruments and should be invoked only with caution, and with well-defined objectives and time frames. Indefinitely imposed, such tools will be counter-productive and serve no legitimate purposes. In this connection, we welcome the recent efforts made by the Security Council to develop benchmarks for smart sanctions. We urge the Council to put these regimes under regular periodic reviews and to lift those sanctions that have brought about unwanted and adverse impacts, particularly on innocent people and neighbouring countries.

Viet Nam has been a persistent proponent of nuclear disarmament, and we are pleased that the Secretary-General reiterates the world leaders' resolve and endeavour to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. Viet Nam shares the concerns that the continuing divergence of views among States on priorities and perspectives continues to block further progress on global security and disarmament.

My delegation also wishes to join the Secretary-General in calling on Member States to work together to realize the historic agreements reached at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We share as well his concerns over the plans to deploy national missile defences, which may lead to another arms race. As regards the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, Viet Nam fully supports the Secretary-General's appeal to States to work harder on the issues on which the Conference failed to achieve consensus, as well as to act upon the key recommendations agreed in the Programme of Action.

A great portion of the report deals with the questions of cooperation for development. We fully agree that development is a huge challenge to many countries and to the United Nations itself. The report once again emphasizes the determination of the international community to wage war on poverty and to launch a sustainable campaign to make the right to development a reality for everyone. In this campaign, the report focuses on the efforts to render globalization inclusive and equitable as a key way to reach the goals of development and poverty eradication. We fully subscribe to this approach.

Although there is now much less enthusiasm about the benefits of globalization as more adverse impacts are revealed, there is no question that globalization remains a powerful and dynamic force for growth and development. Globalization opens up market opportunities, expands technological transfers to developing countries and gives them much-needed financial resources through investments. It is of utmost importance that a favourable environment for development be created to enable the developing countries to take part in the global economy.

My delegation is satisfied with the thematic and analytical overview of the work of the Organization presented in the report of the Secretary-General. Let me conclude by stressing once again our continued support for the Secretary-General's leadership in his second term of office in our efforts to strengthen the United Nations, to make our Organization a better instrument of all Member States and to enable it to deal effectively with the challenges of our world today.

Finally, I wish to join the Secretary-General and many others who have spoken before me to express our profound sympathy to the victims of the vicious terrorist attack and to the people and Government of the United States of America.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Bilman (Turkey): I apologize for taking the floor at this hour, but I can assure the Assembly that I will be very brief.

It has come to my delegation's attention that, during this morning's debate, a speaker took the floor and, with reference to paragraph 39 of the Secretary-General's report, repeated a litany of his well-known allegations regarding the Turkish Cypriots. I just want to say that I believe that the Turkish Cypriot authorities will properly respond to those allegations in due course.

Mr. Al-Awdi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): A few minutes ago, my delegation heard the statement made by the representative of Iraq. It is important for us to underline some of the misinformation contained in that statement.

From the outset, my delegation wishes to stress its full commitment to the statement made yesterday by the Ambassador of Kuwait. I reaffirm that Kuwait did not affront Iraq in its statement. We merely referred to the Secretary-General's report on Iraq's non-compliance with Security Council resolutions, as reflected in paragraph 31. We call on Member States to reread that paragraph. We neither misquoted it nor distorted any fact, as the representative of Iraq alleged.

As for the issue of Kuwaiti missing persons and prisoners of war, we would make the following points. Relevant Security Council resolutions on Iraq and Kuwait in no way refer to Iraqi missing persons. However, resolutions 686 (1991), 687 (1991) and 1284 (1999) call on Iraq to extend all necessary cooperation to the International Committee of the Red Cross to facilitate the repatriation of all Kuwaiti and third country prisoners of war and missing persons. Nowhere is reference made to Iraqi missing.

Nevertheless, the Tripartite Commission, entrusted with the humanitarian follow-up to the issue of Kuwaiti prisoners of war, agreed to discuss the issue of Iraqi missing. Iraq's accusation that the Security Council is biased and has ignored the issue of Iraqi missing is therefore false. The Tripartite Commission, created by the Security Council and to which Iraq is a party, has taken up the issue, although the Council itself has never raised the issue of Iraqi missing. The Tripartite Commission was established under resolutions of the Security Council in order to repatriate Kuwaiti missing.

Since the end of the war to liberate Kuwait, we have yet to see our missing. The issue of Kuwaiti and third country missing can be resolved only through Security Council resolutions. Iraq's so-called peaceful overtures are merely attempts to circumvent the Security Council's resolutions. We want the problem of

Kuwaiti missing persons to be resolved in conformity with Security Council resolutions. The initiatives claimed by representatives of Iraq are nothing more than an attempt to evade Security Council resolutions: initiatives are announced, then immediately withdrawn the minute that there is any insistence on compliance with relevant Council resolutions.

We firmly reject persistent Iraqi accusations against Kuwait concerning the use of United States and British aircraft flying from Kuwait to attack Iraqi civilians. No aircraft take off from Kuwait to attack Iraqi civilians. We all recall that at one time it was Iraqi aircraft that attacked Iraqi civilians.

Mr. Hadjiargyrou (Cyprus): I regret that I have to take the floor in response to the statement made by the representative of the Republic of Turkey. The representative of the Republic of Turkey referred to the statement of one delegation — meaning the statement of the Republic of Cyprus made earlier this morning — with reference to paragraph 39 of the report of the Secretary-General. Paragraph 29 refers to the situation in Cyprus, which has been on the United Nations agenda for a very long time. It is there because, for almost three decades, the Republic of Turkey has continued to militarily occupy part of Cypriot territory in violation of United Nations resolutions, including resolution 3212 (XXIX) of 1974, which was adopted unanimously.

The representative of Turkey, furthermore, stated that they would respond with a letter from the Turkish Cypriot authorities. I simply wanted to remind the Assembly that what the representative of Turkey means by "the Turkish Cypriot authorities" is an entity which has been declared legally invalid and which has no standing in this Organization. I want furthermore to say that this is not the first time that we have witnessed this practice by the Republic of Turkey, that is, circulating documents issued by an entity which has been condemned by the Security Council.

Mr. Al-Kadhe (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation is taking the floor to clarify some facts concerning the points raised a moment ago by the Kuwaiti delegation. When the delegation of Kuwait yesterday attacked my country, Iraq did not ask to exercise its right of reply, because the item under discussion related to the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. But my delegation has now been forced to exercise its right of reply in the light of the misinformation and distortions uttered by the Kuwaiti delegation.

I say once again that States are not entitled to interpret in an exaggerated or distorted way statements made by the Secretary-General in his annual report; that would run counter to the diplomacy involved in our discussion of the report of the Secretary-General. My delegation agrees with the Kuwaiti delegation that States should have a chance to read the text of Kuwaiti speech and that of the report of the Secretary-General, especially paragraph 31. The Secretary-General did not hold Iraq internationally responsible, but the statement of the representative of Kuwait included a remark that was untrue: that the Secretary-General holds Iraq internationally responsible. That distorts the words of the Secretary-General.

Let me turn now to the question of Iraqi missing persons. Iraq abides by Security Council resolutions. For four years, Iraq participated in meetings of the Tripartite Commission and the Technical Subcommittee to discuss the matter of missing persons from Kuwait and from other States. In response to a request from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and in implementation of international humanitarian law, the matter of Iraqi missing persons has become part of the work of the Tripartite Commission, which periodically meets at Geneva, and of the Technical Subcommittee, which meets monthly in the Iraq-Kuwait border area. It was agreed to discuss the fate of Iraqi and Kuwaiti missing persons in line with international humanitarian law. Iraq then stated the need to give special attention to Iraqi missing persons — like that given to Kuwaiti and other missing persons. Within the United Nations, we do not disagree on that matter, because it conforms to international humanitarian law and with the work of the ICRC.

Iraq has taken many initiatives, but the representative of Kuwait says that we are evading our responsibilities and commitments. I want to state here that the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq has proposed that a bilateral dialogue between Iraq and Kuwait be held under the auspices of the League of Arab States. Kuwait did not agree to that proposal. I call here upon Kuwait to respond positively to the initiative put forward by the Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs; we await a response. Only then will we know who is trying to evade discussion of this subject and who is seeking to exploit this humanitarian issue with a view to making political gains to harm Iraq and to continue the sanctions imposed on it, thus inflicting pain and suffering on the Iraqi people. More than 1.5 million citizens have been victims, which runs counter to the principles and purposes of the United Nations.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of Kuwait, who wishes to speak a second time in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Al-Awdi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am sorry to take the floor again, but I am obliged to do so in the light of certain facts. I did not attack Iraq in my statement, as the representative of Iraq has said; our statement is here and everyone has access to it.

Regarding the Secretary-General's information, one has only to look at paragraph 31, which addresses Iraq's non-compliance with Security Council resolutions and asks Iraq to reconsider its position if the sanctions against it are to be lifted. That country should read this paragraph in order to know what is contained therein. It refers to missing persons. Iraq talks about international and humanitarian law, and yet it did not wish to participate in the work of the Tripartite Commission. For political reasons, which I will not go into at present, Iraq does not shoulder its obligations. As we have said, it is Iraq that is not responding to the bilateral dialogue on Kuwaiti missing persons, including the latest initiative on a bilateral dialogue. We inform the Secretary-General that for us to sit down in a bilateral dialogue with Iraq, we must have assurances from Iraq that it possesses information on Kuwaiti missing persons. It is pointless to sit down in a bilateral dialogue with Iraq if Iraq does not have information. We have been involved in a dialogue thus far without obtaining anything. They have told us that they have 126 Kuwaiti prisoners but that they do not know where they are located.

My delegation has said, and repeats, that we have witnessed Iraq's attempts to evade its obligations regarding international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions in connection with Kuwaiti missing persons. This involves Security Council resolutions and the principles of international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions. I repeat this, and one needs only to read paragraph 31 of the Secretary-General's report to assess the veracity of my statements.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of Iraq, who wishes to speak a second time in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Al-Kadhe (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I apologize for taking the floor again. However, I am compelled to do so to show the real truth.

Paragraph 31 of the Secretary-General's report includes much information. However, the Secretary-General never stated that Iraq is internationally responsible. While the statement made by the Ambassador of Kuwait quotes the Secretary-General as saying that Iraq is internationally responsible, that is erroneous. I repeat, erroneous. I leave it to States to ascertain the text of this paragraph. The report is before the Assembly.

In this Hall, I say and I repeat, there is not one Kuwaiti or non-Kuwaiti prisoner in Iraq. The Tripartite Commission and the Technical Subcommittee are looking into the issue of missing persons, not prisoners of war. As members all know, in Security Council resolution 687 (1991), the ceasefire resolution enjoined Iraq to release all prisoners of all nationalities. Iraq has indeed released all prisoners of war to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). They numbered over 5,000. Meetings were held in Riyadh, attended by Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Iraq, as well as by the ICRC, following the ceasefire in order to release the prisoners to the ICRC, and therefore that resolution was considered to have been implemented. The release of prisoners of war was one of the ceasefire conditions. Surely the representative of Kuwait knows that.

As for the statement that Iraq never provided any information on Kuwaiti prisoners of war, that is incorrect. Kuwait provided 5,000 names through the ICRC to the Government of Iraq, and we provided the relevant information to the Kuwaiti delegation. Out of 5,000 names on the initial list provided by Kuwait, 598 names remain. The current number of missing persons, according to Kuwaiti files, is 598. I call on the ICRC and on its representative, if it has a representative in this Hall, to kindly confirm or refute what I have just stated: 598 names remaining from a list of over 5,000 provided in 1991. That shows how much Iraq has cooperated in providing information to the ICRC. We are prepared to continue considering the issue of missing persons. It is definitely a humanitarian issue as long as it is not exploited for political ends, as is the case now with Kuwait.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.

United Nations

A/56/PV.11

General Assembly

Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

11th plenary meeting

Wednesday, 26 September 2001, 10 a.m.

New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo .... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 10 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/56/1 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): The despicable acts of violence committed on 11 September in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania have cast a sombre shadow over the opening of this year's General Assembly session. The outrage of the Government and the people of Jamaica at the terrible toll in death and injury has already been conveyed to the Government and the people of the United States of America, but I wish to reiterate our sincere sympathy and profound condolences to the bereaved families. The orchestration of the attacks forcefully underscores the need for the international community to urgently take effective measures to eliminate terrorism in all its forms. It is therefore fitting that the General Assembly will hold a debate on this issue on 1 October.

I should like to extend my warmest congratulations to the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea on his election as the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session and assure him of the full cooperation and support of the Jamaican delegation. I would also like to express our deepest appreciation to Mr. Harri Holkeri for his excellent leadership of the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan on his re-election as Secretary-General and to reaffirm Jamaica's support for and confidence in him and in his vision for the United Nations.

I should also like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and analytical report on the work of the Organization over the past year, and for the framework for action which he set out to deal with our changed realities. We have noted with satisfaction the report's attention to conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace-building, within the wider mandate of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security.

An important achievement during the past year was the Organization's action to improve the way in which peacekeeping operations are designed and implemented, so as to enhance the immediacy of response and the efficiency and effectiveness of the delivery of assistance in conflict areas. This includes efforts to improve the system of consultation between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries. We therefore welcome the adoption of the report of the United Nations Panel on Peace Operations and its implementation plan, and have sought to play an active part in its operationalization.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Jamaica also welcomes the Secretary-General's demonstrated commitment to promoting a culture of prevention. Within this context, assiduous attention to the root causes of conflict is critical to a proactive, preventive strategy in pre-conflict situations. Experience has shown that effective conflict prevention demands an integrated approach to sustainable economic development, the promotion of social justice and the protection of human rights. Jamaica will therefore continue to advocate a coordinated approach to conflict prevention, involving the entire United Nations system.

The strengthening of civilian missions to enhance post-conflict peace-building strategies is also deserving of greater attention. We continue to be concerned at the relative paucity of resources earmarked for the rebuilding of post-conflict societies. Without this much needed support to make adequate provision for the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants and to ensure the establishment of sound institutional infrastructure, the significant investment made in the peacekeeping phase of operations may result in precious little return. We believe that regional and subregional organizations can play an important supportive role. We welcome the multidisciplinary approach taken by the Secretary-General, particularly in regard to situations in West Africa, in cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and the proposed establishment of a United Nations Office in West Africa to enhance the Organization's capacity for monitoring, early warning and conflict prevention in the subregion.

In regard to our own region, Jamaica places great store in the continued work of the Organization of American States and of the Caribbean Community in Haiti, in cooperation with the United Nations.

The urgency of humanitarian concerns in conflict areas has brought into sharper focus the need to protect civilians affected by armed conflict. Deliberate attacks against civilians, humanitarian workers and other non-combatants demonstrate that there is a clear need for the Organization to continue to insist on full respect at all levels for the principles of international law, particularly human rights and humanitarian law. It is incumbent on the international community to ensure that those who target civilians are brought to justice. To this end, we strongly support the work of the international criminal tribunals and look forward to the early establishment of the International Criminal Court.

Jamaica is also particularly gratified at the increased sensitivity to the disproportionate effects of war on women and children, and at the growing appreciation for the valuable contribution that women can make towards the prevention and resolution of conflict. Efforts to ensure adequate representation of women at all levels of the decision-making process, from conflict prevention to peace-building, must therefore be pursued. In this regard, the decisions of the Security Council and the General Assembly to incorporate a gender perspective in peacekeeping operations are welcome.

The international community, at its historic Millennium Assembly last year, set the foundation and framework for a people-centred development agenda. We committed ourselves to the implementation of a strategy to enrich and sustain the quality of life of the broadest cross-section of the world's people, particularly the poor.

As we now seek to consolidate the institutional priorities for the United Nations, let us ensure that the security and well-being of the individual continues to assume a central place on our agenda. The Secretary General's "Road map towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration" (A/56/326) is an important contribution. So, too, are the intergovernmental processes that engaged our attention over the past year.

In July, the pledge of the international community to implement measures aimed at eradicating extreme poverty was reaffirmed in the Brussels Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. Our engagement in the preparatory processes for the special session on children, the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development has demonstrated, at the very least, a readiness to grapple with the vexing issues and the challenges that represent the spectrum of the development agenda.

We also reviewed, as a matter of urgency, the alarming spread of HIV/AIDS and its devastating effect on seriously affected States. Our attention was given in particular to the plight of Africa, where the ravages of the disease overwhelm the health-care systems, destroy the social fabric, undermine the development capacity of many economies and decimate populations. The fortunes of the countries of the

Caribbean are but one step removed from that of Africa, our subregion claiming the second fastest prevalence rate in the world.

It is appropriate that the threat of HIV/AIDS is being addressed as a development challenge — one that threatens not only the future growth and prosperity of the affected countries, but also the security of States. Jamaica welcomed the plan of action adopted at the twenty-sixth special session in June, which expresses a global commitment to battling this epidemic at the national, regional and international levels. It is our hope that this international commitment will find expression in technical and financial support on the part of the United Nations system.

The importance, too, of this year's review of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda should not be overlooked. For in this new urban millennium, in which more than half of the people of the world will live in large cities, urbanization will present formidable challenges for sustainable human development. Increasing urban poverty, particularly in developing countries, has resulted in exponential growth of squatter settlements, taxing physical and social infrastructure, with serious attendant environmental problems. Indeed, to achieve effective human settlement is to address integrally the urban issues of poverty, homelessness, unemployment and the marginalization of the most vulnerable groups in our societies.

Let us therefore use the momentum of Istanbul+5 to renew our commitment to improving the state of our human settlements; to ensuring adequate shelter for our poor; and to promoting urban development and renewal. In this effort we encourage a participatory approach, with Governments working in partnership with all local stakeholders, the private sector and community groups.

Jamaica remains deeply concerned at the alarming spread of the illicit arms trade, which contributes to the escalation and perpetuation of violence in the communities of Member States, undermining human rights and increasing the threat to both personal security and the stability of society. We therefore welcomed the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It represents an important first step on the part of all Member States towards embracing a meaningful strategy to combat the illegal trade in small arms at the national, regional and international levels.

The open debate on small arms convened by the Security Council in August also acknowledged the proliferation of small arms as a critical factor undermining the efforts of the international community to maintain international peace and security. The indiscriminate use of these weapons in conflict and post-conflict areas has contributed to the breakdown of peace agreements and to the frustration of peacekeeping and peace-building efforts. The readiness of the Security Council to consider taking integrally into account the impact of the proliferation of small arms on its work is, in our view, a very promising sign, and one that is long overdue. We believe that the time has come for all of the organs of the United Nations system to pursue a more comprehensive and coordinated strategy, so as to fashion an effective response to what has increasingly become a complex challenge to disarmament, development, democracy and human security.

Consideration of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization should not be considered complete without an assessment of the capacity of the United Nations to implement the mandates of the General Assembly. That there has been no budgetary growth for the past four bienniums has disturbing implications for the ability of the Organization to respond to new mandates and emerging issues. As the Secretary-General has reminded us, we must prepare for the possibilities of the future and meet the new demands made on the United Nations. The continued recourse to borrowing from the peacekeeping accounts because of the shortfalls in the payments of contributions by Member States is therefore disconcerting.

Our collective goal must be to ensure that the Organization is well placed to discharge its responsibilities effectively. The dictates of the present global environment demand it.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, we wish to thank the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, for the report contained in document A/56/1. We consider it to be a very thorough and lucid account of the wide range of activities conducted by the United Nations during the last year. We feel perhaps that the report lacks a connecting idea, which some of the previous reports had. However, we recognize that the year covered by the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly was an exceptional period, marked at its outset by the historic Millennium Summit and, over the year's course, by several important events, including the extremely smooth and well-deserved re-election of the Secretary-General to a second term.

Nobody could have imagined that the year would end with an event that has shaken us all, occurring, as the Secretary-General himself reminded us in the addendum of 14 September, just 24 hours after the publication of the report. The terrorist acts of 11 September, to which the General Assembly and the Security Council reacted immediately, will surely have implications of primary importance for our daily lives, on international relations and on the United Nations. We will begin the examination of the subject on 1 October. For that reason, I will refrain from speaking on this subject until that occasion, though it is on all of our minds and is the backdrop to the discussions of these days.

However, the situation we face does allow us to underline, still more than ever, the indispensable nature of the United Nations, or, as the Secretary General put it, "its enduring significance" as the only universal organism at our disposal for collectively dealing with the common challenges we face. We are concerned that this so very fundamental idea is questioned in many circles, as became clear, for example, from the reactions encountered at, and even the confrontations arising in, the recent World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance. We therefore wish to reaffirm that today we need the United Nations more than ever. The range of issues covered in the report of the Secretary-General, combined with recent events that have affected us deeply, are the most eloquent confirmation of that.

There is much in the report to commented on and so little time to do so. As a result, I would just like to signal a few aspects of the report of particular interest to my country.

First, the extraordinary contribution that peace operations have made in keeping and building peace in several regions in the world, particularly in Africa. For our part, we fully appreciate the presence of the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala, and we take due note of and agree with the statement by the Secretary-General contained in paragraph 65 of the report.

Secondly, we also applaud the extensive work of the Organization in the area of humanitarian aid. My country has witnessed the effectiveness of the United Nations in dealing with natural disasters, which, unfortunately, have afflicted my region disproportionately in recent years.

.Thirdly, we believe that one of the most important achievements of last year was the holding of the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS and the Declaration of Commitment approved there. The implementation of the agreement will impact on public awareness and will undoubtedly help to deal with the effects of the pandemic and of related diseases, such as tuberculosis and malaria.

Fourthly, in our ongoing effort to contribute to disarmament, we regret that the results of the Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects have fallen short of our expectations.

Fifthly, we agree with the Secretary-General on the importance of fully implementing the recommendations of the United Nations Panel on Peace Operations and on the importance of considering the proposals before us to strengthen the peacekeeping capacity of the United Nations.

Sixthly, we stress the importance of the work of the Organization for fomenting cooperation for development. In this regard, we believe that one of the activities of greatest relevance and potential at our disposal is the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, next March. In this connection, I would also like to mention the Rio+10 summit to be held in Johannesburg.

Seventhly, we believe that the report, in chapter III, underestimates the contribution and potential of the regional commissions towards the work of the Organization. Notable in this context is the report's virtual omission of the activities of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Eighthly, we share the Secretary-General's proposal to make ourselves more open to our respective civil societies. In this regard, we support the more active participation of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in our deliberations.

Ninthly, having had the privilege of presiding over the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly during its fifty-fifth session, we wish to ratify the elementary principle that all Member States must pay their dues on time, in full and without conditions attached. We feel too that the time has come to abandon the zero-growth policy in the budget for the biennium 2002-2003 if the Organization is to fully meet its obligations.

Finally, in spite of the events of 11 September, we believe that a long-term vision for the work of the Organization is appropriately set out in the Millennium Declaration. We look forward eagerly to action on the Secretary-General's plan for the full implementation of the various elements of that Declaration.

Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his report to the General Assembly on the work of the Organization, document A/56/1. That comprehensive and complete report outlines the challenges facing the United Nations in its quest for peace, security and development. It thus helps advance our discussion about possible approaches to future collective action by the international community. The Secretary-General's contribution should form a basis upon which we can unite our efforts to strengthen the work of the Organization.

We agree with the Secretary-General that the pursuit of international peace and progress requires the sustained commitment and engagement of the community of nations, but our task today is to work to make a reality of the principles of the Millennium Declaration, which aroused such high hopes and which calls upon us to set the priorities of an international community which expects greater justice, progress and freedom.

In the chapter entitled "Achieving peace and security" — two key spheres of United Nations activity — priority is given to the prevention of armed conflict. It is indeed time to make prevention central to international efforts towards peace and development. We must promote a true culture of prevention. In that context, we welcome last June's report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict (A/55/985-S/2001/574 and Corr.1). As members are aware, Tunisia is strongly committed to the United Nations so that the international community can catch disputes before they descend into open conflict.

Among that report's recommendations are some that the Secretary-General reiterates in the report before us today, notably on an integrated strategy to strengthen the capacity of United Nations bodies and agencies, to include increased use of multisectoral fact-finding missions and confidence-building measures in volatile regions.

Here, with respect to paragraph 19, I want to stress that we agree that a well-planned and coordinated peace-building strategy can play a significant role in conflict prevention. That approach has the further advantage of saving human lives — not to mention the budgetary resources of the Organization.

Before moving on from the chapter on peace and security, I want to thank the Secretary-General for his overview of developments in various areas of tension throughout the world where the United Nations is present in one way or another. I want also to say that at a time when there has been progress in the situation in some of those areas, it is frustrating to note that in the Middle East there has been a serious deterioration in the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. The peace process remains blocked, and the Mitchell report cannot even be implemented owing to the policies and practices of the Tel Aviv Government. While our appreciation goes to our wise Secretary-General for his efforts to help resolve the crisis, we stress the need for action by the international community towards resuming negotiations between the parties. We also reaffirm the urgent need for a comprehensive, just and lasting solution of the Middle East conflict on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and on the basis of the principle of land for peace.

Turning to development — which is synonymous with peace — we note with interest the chapter entitled "Cooperation for development". We agree with the Secretary-General's analysis of the international situation and the prospects for collective action in this sphere. As the Secretary-General observes, the United Nations continues to dedicate substantial resources to supporting Governments in the implementation of their development objectives and priorities. The United Nations is more than an essential forum; it is an irreplaceable tool for stimulating and catalysing international cooperation for development.

There are so many challenges, such as: the extreme poverty and destitution that are widespread throughout the world; underdevelopment; appalling inequality; devastating pandemics; environmental degradation; the digital divide; and many others. The situation is such that, in this era of globalization, we wonder, along with some economists, whether it would be better for many, many countries first of all to be integrated into the international economy. Is it not time for the international community, at the dawn of the new century, to redouble its efforts and accelerate the many kinds of cooperation to meet all these challenges, with respect for human dignity, equality and equity, as advocated by world leaders in the Millennium Declaration?

As the Secretary-General notes, there are many ways for the international community of nations to act. These include the mobilization of resources for development and for poverty eradication; the creation of new opportunities for the poorest and least developed nations; the promotion of social development and of sustainable development; and other kinds of action as well. In due course, my country will reaffirm its proposals on this subject.

We endorse the Secretary-General's analysis in paragraphs 138 and 139 of the report, which rightly highlights the intrinsic link between the crucial areas of financing, trade and development. Hence the urgent need for robust action to find satisfactory solutions to the problems of indebtedness of the developing countries and the access of their commodities to the markets of the developed countries; hence, too, the importance of significantly increasing foreign direct investment and of reversing the downward trend of official development assistance so that we may again progress towards achieving the goal of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product of the developing countries.

In this context, the upcoming International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held from 18 to 22 March 2002 in Monterrey, Mexico, is of very special importance. We welcome the Secretary-General's decision to establish a High-Level Panel On Financing For Development to draft a report to assist Governments in fine-tuning their proposals for the Monterrey Conference. The Summit scheduled to be held in South Africa in 2002 will give the international community another opportunity to reinvigorate its commitment to sustainable development.

Making globalization a positive force for all mankind is the major challenge before us today, according to the Millennium Declaration. The fruits of globalization cannot benefit everyone unless we find appropriate responses to the structural problems of the developing countries. On this will depend the balance of societies in the world that we wish to build for the future, for the current and coming generations — a world that must be just and equitable and in which the values of liberty, equality and solidarity will ultimately find full expression.

To that end, the ever-renewed commitment and resolve of nations are desirable — indeed, necessary — in building tomorrow's world, rekindling hope and repulsing such threats as poverty and destitution. Human dignity is one and indivisible. It is therefore entirely appropriate that the Secretary-General, at the very beginning of his report, stresses the importance of the ongoing commitment of the community of nations.

Africa requires special attention, as called for in the Millennium Declaration. It has made enormous sacrifices to carry out the necessary structural, political, economic and social reforms. It has clearly demonstrated its determination to take charge of its destiny, as the Secretary-General recalls. Nonetheless, the many challenges facing the continent are thwarting its efforts, inescapably requiring a substantial contribution from the international community. The United Nations is the forum towards which Africa naturally turns. I wish to reiterate here our appeal for increased mobilization on the part of the international community on behalf of Africa, its peoples and their human rights, including their right to development and prosperity.

In the chapter on the international legal order, the Secretary-General stresses important developments in a number of issues related to the consolidation of the rule of law. Terrorism is one of those issues. The horrendous terrorist attacks perpetrated on 11 September against facilities in the United States of America shed a drear light on the question of international terrorism and prompt a number of questions of crucial importance, among which: What should we do to protect ourselves against this devastating scourge? While we wait for a response to emerge from the necessary discussion, one thing is sure: the international community cannot afford to continue to address this question as it has done heretofore. We must acquire the means to defend ourselves against this scourge. On 1 October, we will return to this idea in the debate on this subject.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to reiterate to Mr. Kofi Annan our heartfelt congratulations on his unanimous election to a second term of office as Secretary-General. We wish him every success in his task, which is enormous but within his capacities to tackle.

Mr. Mbanefo (Nigeria): I would like to congratulate Mr. Han Seung-soo on his election and, through him, his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for a very successful fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. I wish to assure the President and members of the Bureau of the cooperation and support of my delegation towards the successful completion of this session under his presidency.

My delegation congratulates the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, on his re-election and expresses its profound appreciation for his report on the work of the Organization. The report discusses clearly some of the most pressing issues currently confronting humanity, such as violent conflicts, international terrorism, human rights abuses, deplorable humanitarian conditions, increased numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons, the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the problems of sustainable development.

The issue of conflicts and the achievement of global peace and security remains one of the greatest challenges of the twenty-first century. While my delegation recognizes the fact that the United Nations, through the Security Council, has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, a successful conflict prevention strategy will require the cooperation of all.

My delegation therefore commends the efforts of the Secretary-General in his use of the tools of quiet diplomacy, such as fact-finding and confidence-building missions, an informal network of eminent persons, mediation, conciliation and arbitration, in the search for peace. We support the recommendation in the Secretary-General's report on the use of interdisciplinary fact-finding and confidence-building missions to volatile regions and particularly commend the recent mission dispatched to West Africa, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The Millennium Declaration called for enhanced institutional cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in the search for the peaceful resolution of conflicts. We are delighted to note the success of such an approach, as demonstrated in West Africa, where the United Nations, in active collaboration with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Mano River Union countries, participated in addressing complex humanitarian, political and security situations affecting Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. The United Nations continues to support ECOWAS initiatives in the promotion of dialogue among the three countries in the belief that, without such dialogue, efforts to address the root causes of the subregion's problems will remain ineffective.

The Nigerian delegation therefore welcomes the Secretary-General's recommendation to develop regional strategies that will include regional actors in finding solutions to conflicts. I appeal for financial and logistical assistance to such regional and subregional organizations in order to enhance their effectiveness. Furthermore, considering the importance of an effective Secretariat to the overall success of conflict prevention, we request that the necessary funds be made available to the Secretary-General on request to enable the Secretariat cope effectively with the complexities of today's conflicts.

Nigeria is deeply concerned about acts of international terrorism, of which we have all been victims recently. It will be recalled that our delegation participated in the preparation of the General Assembly Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, in 1994, and the supplementary Declaration, years later. Nigeria is ready to cooperate with other members of the international community through bilateral and multilateral efforts to suppress all forms of terrorism. We condemn in the strongest terms all acts of terrorism and stress that terrorists should not be allowed political haven as asylum-seekers or granted refugee status in any country. It is also important that we expose those who support those terrorists under whatever guise. Furthermore, we support current effort to adopt a convention on the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism.

In the Millennium Declaration our leaders resolved to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to reduce the global risk posed by small arms and landmines. The continued proliferation of small arms is a source of concern for us and, indeed, for all developing countries. The international community should not fail to take cognizance of the correlation between instability, the proliferation of small arms and the incidence of conflict. Africa remains the most affected region, considering the devastation that small arms-aided conflicts have wreaked on communities, societies and States. It is against this background that we welcome the objectives of the recently concluded United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We urge the international community to take concrete steps to ensure effective control of the circulation of small arms.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic continues to pose serious challenges to our developmental efforts. We appreciate the efforts of the United Nations and the contributions of the international community in combating the HIV/AIDS scourge, particularly in Africa. We endorse the call made by the Secretary-General during the twenty sixth special session of the General Assembly, on HIV/AIDS, for a new global campaign in the fight against HIV/AIDS. We also endorse the Plan of Action adopted at the special summit of the Organization of African Unity on AIDS, which was intended to translate into concrete initiatives the commitments made by African leaders to intensify their efforts and mobilize resources for the prevention, care and treatment of the disease. We further endorse the proposal by the Secretary-General for the establishment of a Global AIDS and Health Fund in order to mobilize the funds necessary to address the AIDS epidemic.

One of the greatest scourges confronting mankind today is poverty. A situation where more than half of the world's population lives on less than $2 per day is not only totally unacceptable. It is also an indictment on humanity and globalization. While globalization has rapidly integrated countries through trade, investment flows and information and communications technologies in our era of a knowledge-based global economy, it is vital that its benefits should no longer be confined to the prosperity of a few developed countries and peoples. The increasing level of poverty in developing countries, particularly in Africa, remains a burden on the resources available to those countries for development. That is why Nigeria welcomes the decision of world leaders to wage a war on poverty by launching a sustained campaign to make the right to development a reality. African leaders have established a new initiative based on a common vision and shared conviction that we have a pressing duty to eradicate poverty and to put our countries on the path of sustainable socio-economic growth and development. We therefore look forward to the support and enabling partnership of the international community for the success of the New African Initiative.

I cannot conclude this statement without making reference to the issue of human rights. Bridging the gap between human rights norms and their implementation continues to pose a substantial challenge for our Organization. My delegation therefore endorses the call by the Secretary-General for Member States to ratify the six core United Nations human rights treaties and the Statute of the International Criminal Court. We also support the need to strengthen the International Court of Justice as a vital organ in the peaceful settlement of disputes.

In conclusion, my delegation is pleased to note that commendable efforts have been made by the Secretary-General to implement reforms aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of the Organization. In general, we are satisfied with the various initiatives being undertaken by the Secretary-General. We pledge our continued cooperation in the efforts to strengthen our Organization.

Mr. Petrič (Slovenia): Allow me to congratulate President Han Seung-soo on his assumption of the presidency of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. He and the Bureau have the full confidence and support of my country in carrying out their important tasks.

I would also like to thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for yet another comprehensive and concise annual report on the work of the Organization. We are inspired by his resolution to bring the United Nations closer to all people and to revive confidence in our global partnership. We are glad that his leadership, experience, vision and humanity will continue to be devoted to our Organization in the coming years.

The annual report makes a good presentation of our past achievements and provides a number of ideas on how to conduct the activities of United Nations in the future. Together with the road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the annual report provides us an opportunity to present our views on the issues before us and to chart the action to be taken by the United Nations and the General Assembly.

We are still horrified by the loss of the lives of fellow New Yorkers and others caused by brutal terrorists. The United Nations has a great role to play in the fight against terrorism. Close cooperation in the suppression of terrorism is in the interest of every civilized nation, as terrorism is an international and global scourge affecting the lives of each and every one of us. We must now stand together and make sure that the perpetrators are brought to justice, wherever they may be. No country should be allowed to provide safe haven for terrorists anymore. The Security Council and the General Assembly should take appropriate further steps to make that happen. It is a difficult task and may take some time to realize, but it fits the United Nations perfectly. The United Nations role is indeed central here, since combating terrorism in the long run also means eradicating its roots — hatred, racism and poverty in particular.

The maintenance of international peace and security is the fundamental purpose of the United Nations. Peacekeeping operations are of particular importance. We are pleased that the Brahimi recommendations have been well received and are supported by the Security Council. As a way of contributing to ensuring adequate resources for peacekeeping, Slovenia decided last year to voluntarily relinquish the discount in the peacekeeping scale of assessments that it has enjoyed. It is encouraging that the Secretariat is now finalizing a practical guide for Headquarters support for the missions in the field by formulating coherent peace-building strategies. Those are, indeed, essential in conflict prevention. We are also pleased that such strategies increasingly include protection of civilians, in particular women and children.

To prevent tragedies of massive proportions such as those in Rwanda and Srebrenica, Slovenia pointed out last year the need to prepare the ground for adequate preventive action, including humanitarian action, if and when it becomes necessary. We are still of the opinion that the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, should be the framework for such action. However, we should not run the risk of neglect of the problem of humanitarian action resulting in a tendency for our Organization to be bypassed when such action is taken.

Conflict prevention and human security should be central among the United Nations preoccupations. During our presidency in November 1999, Slovenia initiated the first open session of the Security Council on conflict prevention. It gives us great pleasure now to welcome the first report (A/55/985) of the Secretary-General on conflict prevention and the report's tangible and comprehensive recommendations. We agree that effective conflict prevention should address the root causes of conflicts and embrace both short- and long-term political, economic, humanitarian and other measures. We consider this report an important step on the road to establishing a working culture of prevention.

The Secretary-General in his annual report pointed out that the international tribunals have made significant advances. We share the view that they indeed contribute to peace and justice.

A large majority of States have clearly demonstrated their will to put an end to impunity by adopting the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. We hope that the Statute will enter into force soon. For the first time, those responsible for the most heinous crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes will be brought to justice, no matter where the crimes have been committed. This should most certainly improve the future conduct of both States and individuals.

The capacity to adjust to new conditions is crucial for the future role of the United Nations. When reforming our main organs — and we should reform them — we should stick less to our own perceptions and try harder in the coming years to reach a consensus that will enable our Organization to best adapt to the changing world. It is also important that the members of the Security Council understand that the legitimacy of their decisions rests on the support of the entire membership of the United Nations, and that transparency of the Security Council's work can often contribute to better compliance with its decisions.

Globalization is an ongoing and unavoidable process. To reap the benefits of globalization and diminish its negative effects, we have to be able to responsibly master this phenomenon through ever-closer dialogue and partnerships among all sectors of our societies. The challenge of globalization does not bear only on its economic, financial and social aspects. It brings also new challenges to the maintenance of peace and security and to the establishment of a common system of values. We in the United Nations bear a special responsibility to ensure that the benefits of globalization be spread equitably and that the non-privileged will not suffer its ill consequences.

In the past year there have been important international conferences at which the United Nations addressed some crucial contemporary questions facing the international community. These include the General Assembly special session on HIV/AIDS, the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We consider that these conferences made an important contribution and are proof of the vitality of our Organization.

Let me mention also the recent Managua meeting, which was an important step in the framework of the Ottawa Convention to eradicate anti-personnel land mines from the face of the earth. I am proud to report again on Slovenian endeavours in this field. The International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance, based in my capital, continues to be the most important actor in demining in the Balkans.

In conclusion, let me point out that another world summit for children is an initiative particularly close to the heart of Slovenia, and we look forward to its convening as soon as practicable. We in Slovenia traditionally give great attention to our children and to the activities of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Slovenia decided this year to double its contribution to UNICEF. An investment in the care of and compassion for children is an investment in enhancing the values of the civilization and human security of tomorrow. Therefore, we are particularly pleased that care for children is gaining ever more attention within the entire United Nations system.

Mr. Li Hyong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I first congratulate the President on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session.

My delegation expresses its great appreciation to the Secretary-General for presenting his report on the work of the Organization.

I also take this opportunity to express once again our deep regret over the tragic terrorist incidents that occurred in the United States on 11 September and the many innocent lives that were lost.

My delegation has followed with close attention the issues of international security, conflict prevention and the eradication of poverty, as dealt with in the report of the Secretary-General. We share his view that it is the major task of the United Nations to ensure peace and security for all countries in the new millennium.

As we entered the new millennium, arguments designed to destroy the concept of sovereignty and promote "humanitarian intervention" presented major challenges to the independent development of humankind. Acts threatening and violating State sovereignty have become undisguised, and most conflicts remain unresolved because of external interference. Where the sovereignty of States is violated, rights to economic development — and even the right to survival — are seriously infringed.

The Charter defines the maintenance of international peace and security as the main purpose of the Organization and the recognition of and respect for the sovereign equality of all Member States as its fundamental principle. This principle was reaffirmed at the Millennium Summit last year.

The United Nations should pay particular attention to ensuring that big countries refrain from threatening the sovereignty of small and weak countries and from taking advantage of conflicts to achieve domination. The nuclear-weapon States should create the confidence necessary to realize comprehensive and complete disarmament, by taking such practical measures as presenting a timetable for scrapping nuclear weapons.

In order to address the challenges facing the international community, the application of a double standard should be rejected and fairness and impartiality should be ensured in United Nations activities. In international relations the exercise of power by big countries is tacitly accepted now, whereas the self-defence measures of small countries are subject to becoming targets of sanctions and pressure. If we are to check this unfairness and the use of double standards, the leading role of the United Nations, particularly the functions and the role of the General Assembly, should be enhanced. The General Assembly, as the highest United Nations organ, should decide on all issues related to international peace and security, so that the other organs do not adopt any resolutions that run counter to the will of the Member States. We consider it necessary to take appropriate steps for the Special Committee on the Charter of the United

Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organizations to take up this issue and present recommendations to the General Assembly.

If United Nations activities are to be democratized, the Security Council should be reformed. In this regard, it will be appropriate to make a breakthrough in reform by, above all, reaching agreement on increasing the non-permanent membership, a matter that can be agreed somewhat easily.

A year has passed since the Co-Chairpersons of the Millennium Summit issued their statement (A/55/PV.4) and the General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution (55/11) supporting the historic Pyongyang inter-Korean summit and the North-South joint declaration. The miraculous events that took place on the Korean peninsula last year resulted from the independent politics and the idea of great national unity of our respected General Kim Jong Il. North and South Korea have jointly presented the agenda item "Peace, security and reunification on the Korean peninsula" again this year, with a view to achieving independent and peaceful reunification, in the spirit of the North-South joint declaration.

I wish to take this opportunity to express thanks to those countries that extend support and solidarity to our efforts to implement the joint declaration, free from outside interference.

Ms. Cedeño Reyes (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the delegation of Venezuela, I wish to congratulate the President on his election. His proven experience and skill in exercising high-level public responsibilities guarantee that under his leadership we will be able to move forward in dealing with the topics on the Assembly's agenda. He can count on our cooperation to work constructively and flexibly in this regard.

With respect to the topic before us, I thank the Secretary-General for the timely submission of his annual report on the work of the Organization. The Secretary-General thus fulfils his responsibility to bring to the attention of the Member States the most important world issues and the state of this Organization during the period under review. While recognizing his contribution in this respect, we also congratulate him on the sincerity of his diagnosis and on the strength of convictions that supports his management at the head of the United Nations.

The comments made by the Secretary-General require the attention of our authorities, since they are the ones who must guide the Organization and provide it with a safe direction in the period of transition the international system has gone through in the past few years. In this regard, we must join efforts to ensure that there is no repetition in this century of tragedies such as the recent terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, which my country categorically condemns. We are convinced that the General Assembly can make an important contribution to this review.

The United Nations finds itself facing an international reality that is as promising as it is paradoxical. On the one hand, it is felt that in the context of growing interdependence and globalization, the management of global matters and the search for solutions to problems of common interest are objectives that can only be promoted through United Nations action that provides a balance of different viewpoints and articulates the interests of States. However, those expectations are often limited as a result of the lack of necessary support of its members and of adaptation of its structures to the signs of these new times.

As the Secretary-General points out, the Millennium Summit, which brought together a large number of heads of State and Government, made possible a renewed faith in multilateralism, particularly the United Nations. It also spoke of the need for relevant reforms so that, with the proper resources and based on observance of the purposes and principles of the Charter, it may respond in a timely and decisive manner to the problems posed in the areas of peace and economic and social development.

Despite the major efforts of the Organization to resolve conflict situations in some regions of the world, we note with concern the continuation of unusually violent conflicts in which the civilian population has become a political objective of groups or factions that defy the basic norms of international humanitarian law. Conflict prevention through the eradication of the social and economic causes of conflict is an urgent, inescapable objective for the international community, given the economic and human benefits that can be realized through such a strategy, based on agreed principles of international relations, such as non-intervention, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, the peaceful resolution of conflicts and respect for the standards of international law.

We agree with the Secretary-General that the success of the United Nations in the field of prevention depends on the support of Member States, which have the ongoing primary responsibility for dealing with the causes of conflict of an internal nature. We believe that we cannot talk about the delegation of responsibilities, but that, rather, we should guide the Organization in promoting a better practice geared towards international cooperation in the areas of conflict prevention and humanitarian emergencies.

In the area of disarmament and arms control, the balance sheet has been mixed. The policies created in the early 1990s, with the passing of multilateral agreements in this area, have been weakened due to the absence of a sustained effort by certain countries with specific responsibilities in this area and the development of certain events that affect the negotiating climate.

Venezuela believes that the Secretary-General's proposal to convene an international conference on the reduction of nuclear dangers is a positive initiative aimed at identifying ways and means to eliminate nuclear arms in the near future, as agreed at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The problem of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is one of the issues that have been added to the multilateral disarmament agenda. This phenomenon aggravates conflicts that are developing in various regions, threatening the security of States, as well as the economic and social future of peoples affected by such wars.

Venezuela is convinced of the need for the international community to adopt measures, on the basis of international cooperation, to eliminate such illicit activity, which is supported by groups and individuals on the fringes of the law. In this connection, we believe that the agreements reached at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which took place in July this year, are a positive step on the path towards disarmament and the prevention of conflict.

Globalization is an inexorable force in these times of change and far-reaching transformation. It has created opportunities, such as the expansion of trade and the fast-paced development of information technology. Even when the benefits of the process can be clearly seen, however, it cannot be denied that they are spread unevenly, as the worsening of extreme poverty among large sectors of the global population shows. In order to redress such imbalances, the international community must take concerted action leading to the adoption of concrete measures to prevent marginalization and the social exclusion of those who remain outside that process.

The Millennium Summit made it possible to reassert the objectives of the social platform as set out by the United Nations Conferences on issues such as the environment, social development, women and population, which placed human beings at the centre of development. We must ensure that the objectives set out in the declarations and programmes of action are transformed into specific actions to reduce extreme poverty by half, as agreed. Measures taken by national Governments for the promotion of social objectives should be supported by sustained international cooperation, in a spirit of solidarity, to ensure that efforts to this end are carried out effectively and speedily, thereby helping to overcome deprivation, hunger and poverty.

In the context of this approach based on shared responsibility, Venezuela believes that the convening, in March 2002 in Monterrey, of an International Conference on Financing for Development, will provide an ideal opportunity for both developing and developed countries to act jointly in adopting a series of political measures to promote financial stability and reach consensus on the need to set up a new financial architecture. My country believes that that Conference should also consider the possibility of mobilizing national and international resources for social development with a view to implementing the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action, adopting trade-related measures and providing debt relief.

Although progress has been made with regard to human rights and fundamental freedoms as a result of the consolidation and strengthening of democracy in the world, we are concerned about the fact that signs of racism and xenophobia still persist. We had thought that such manifestations, which run counter to human rights and undermine human dignity, were dead and buried. The recent World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, which took place in South Africa, provided a unique opportunity for the international community to adopt measures in response to discrimination on the basis of race, colour or ethnic origin.

With regard to the consolidation of an international order based on the validity of the norms of international law, Venezuela supported from the outset the establishment of an International Criminal Court, and we took part in the process to establish the Court, on the basis of principles of universality, complementarity and autonomy. In that spirit, convinced of the contribution that the Court can make to the cause of peace and respect for international law, through the prosecution and punishment of those responsible for international crimes, and to the prevention of impunity, in June last year the Government of Venezuela deposited its instrument of ratification of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. This act reflects the priority that our country places on improving and ensuring the credibility and transparency of justice in the international sphere. We hope that this legal instrument will enter into force in the near future so that the Court can be set up and begin to function.

Let us put this Organization at the service of peoples by the resolute promotion of the objectives of peace and social and economic development. The objectives agreed at the Millennium Summit by our heads of State or Government must be achieved within the time frame that has been set out. Now is the time for us to take action in order to give concrete form to hopes for a more equitable and just world, in which the eradication of poverty and the promotion of development are a genuine expression of international peace and stability.

Venezuela agrees with the Secretary-General that the United Nations must become a vehicle for the progress of humankind. To that end, Member States should, through international dialogue and cooperation, direct their efforts in order to respond to the challenges of globalization, at the same time taking advantage of the opportunities that it provides. If it is to fully shoulder its responsibilities, the United Nations will have to engage in constant renewal and adaptation to the realities of the day, and it will need the support and understanding of its Member States.

Mr. Babaa (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like first of all to congratulate Mr. Han, and his country, the Republic of Korea, on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its current session. We are sure that, thanks to his skill and wisdom, our work will be successful.

The General Assembly is beginning its work this year in an atmosphere of sadness and unusual circumstances because of the terrorist attacks that took place on 11 September. My delegation would once again like to convey its deepest sympathy and condolences to the people of the United States and to the families of the victims, whether in the United States or elsewhere, and to express our solidarity with them.

My country and my people understand better than many others the nature of true suffering and the ambiguity of feelings in the wake of such tragedies. Raids on my country in 1986, in which more than 100 aircraft took part and which caused a great deal of destruction and took the lives of many innocent victims, made us aware of such feelings. We welcome and will be taking part in the special debate on terrorism next week, during which my delegation will join others in discussing the subject in detail.

We condemn terrorism in all of its forms and manifestations. However, let me reiterate once again that we believe that terrorism has become a global problem — one that is not restricted only to certain religions or cultures. That is a truth that everyone can understand: terrorist acts occur in all parts of the world. The hatred for Islam, for Arabs, for Muslims that we see in certain parts of the world must be condemned vehemently, just as we condemn terrorism, hatred and racism, wherever they occur.

International terrorism has become a worldwide scourge. Accordingly, the international community must jointly combat its heinous crimes, which target innocent victims. Coordination and cooperation are required. However, dealing with this scourge requires not only that we redouble our efforts in seeking justice, not revenge, but also that international action be based on international law and legitimacy, and that no double standards should exist.

The international community must also draw a distinction between terrorism directed against innocent people and a legitimate struggle against foreign domination and occupation. We therefore call for the convening of an international conference to define terrorism and the means to eliminate it, after determining its diverse causes. That conference should be free from political considerations. As was stated by the Secretary-General just two days ago when he introduced his report, we should not jump to the conclusion that combating terrorism means a clash between civilizations, religions or cultures. As the Secretary-General said in an article that was published in *The New York Times* and reproduced in the international press, in taking steps against the perpetrators of terrorist acts, we must also deal with the political, economic and social conditions and causes underlying this kind of hatred and aberration in order to restore peace, justice and security in the world.

In the weeks, months and years to come, we will need to base ourselves on international legitimacy and on the United Nations, which we have accepted as being the proper institutional framework for dealing with the global scourges of armed conflict, terrorism, poverty and so on. The heads of State and Government, in adopting the Millennium Declaration, reaffirmed their resolve to work towards a world free of conflict, illiteracy, poverty and disease — a more just and developed world. That historic document reaffirmed the elementary principles of human dignity, justice and equality, as well as the need to resolve disputes by peaceful means, in keeping with the principles of justice and international law and the right of people under occupation to self-determination.

The international community must therefore reaffirm those principles and enhance the capacity of the United Nations to discharge the tasks incumbent upon it in this ever-changing international situation.

We also agree with the view of the Secretary-General that, in this globalized world, cooperation and partnerships are key and that we must share tasks and responsibilities — between nations, Governments and regional and international organizations — so that we can benefit from globalization while averting its negative effects.

We congratulate the Secretary-General on his election to a new term of office. We applaud his enthusiasm and his efforts as well as his initiatives and dedication in trying to strengthen the United Nations — this Organization that is so necessary for dealing with the challenges of the international village in which we all live.

In the context of our efforts to prevent armed conflicts and deal with their underlying causes; provide humanitarian assistance for the more vulnerable sectors of society; encourage international cooperation; protect disadvantaged peoples and strengthen international justice and legality, attempts are being made to marginalize this lofty Organization, whose founding fathers, more than half a century ago, were determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. We are also seeing attempts to prevent the Security Council from discharging its task — that is, the maintenance of international peace and security. For instance, we have seen the Security Council paralysed in recent weeks because one permanent member was threatening to use its veto during the discussion of a chronic problem. As a result, the situation in the region under consideration deteriorated, leading to a greater loss of human life than would have occurred otherwise.

We need to accelerate the reform of the United Nations, particularly that of the Security Council. We should increase the Council's membership so that it can discharge its mandate without being held hostage to the domination of one Member State.

We endorse the view of the Secretary-General, expressed in his report, regarding the deterioration of the situation in the Arab countries and the need to find a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of the relevant decisions taken by the United Nations. The spiral of violence in the Arab region is the result of the Zionist military occupation of Palestinian land for more than 34 years. The occupying forces have attempted to expropriate more land and expand existing settlements; to destroy Palestinian infrastructure; to humiliate and subjugate the people; to impose collective sanctions on them; to uproot trees; and to assassinate Palestinian symbols of legitimate resistance.

The debate on sanctions and their effectiveness must continue. As the Secretary-General says, sanctions have untold humanitarian consequences. We are opposed to their imposition, and we call for the use of peaceful means and constructive dialogue in resolving disputes. As stated in the Charter, sanctions must be the last resort after other measures have been attempted.

The political objectives of one State must not prevail over those of others. Sanctions must be lifted as soon as the reasons for their imposition cease to exist, and no pretexts must be used to maintain them. Our country, for example, has suffered from unjust sanctions, and, as all are aware, all segments of the Libyan population have been affected by them as well.

Although our country has discharged all its obligations pursuant to the relevant Security Council resolutions, sanctions have not yet been totally lifted. The Security Council must restore its credibility by truly seeking to maintain international peace and security pursuant to the Charter; it must not be the political tool of the strongest countries.

We welcome the study of the political and development problems of Africa through the elaboration of a strategy to treat the real reasons for conflict, in the context of cooperation with the regional and subregional organizations. We also welcome United Nations initiatives to give priority to the development issues of Africa. The Millennium Declaration required the United Nations to be a catalyst in mustering resources for the development of all the continent.

We welcome the fact that last July at its high-level segment, the Economic and Social Council endorsed the New African Initiative, adopted at the Lusaka summit. We welcome the creation of the new African Union in Lusaka and the declaration by African States reaffirming their commitment to fighting for sustainable development and to overcoming the present challenges. We hope that, following these initiatives, the General Assembly can take the necessary decisions to resolve African problems, alleviate poverty, relieve debt, deal with diseases such as AIDS and malaria, and develop human and other resources.

Finally, I should like to stress that in our twenty-first century, the world has become a small global village. Every part of the world suffers the consequences, positive or negative, of whatever happens elsewhere. We cannot live separate from each other. Any pressure, any injustice, any social or economic problem, any disease has repercussions throughout the world. Therefore, international political will and international resources must be pooled to extinguish these small fires so that they do not develop into a huge conflagration. Poverty and hunger must be dealt with and overcome. The resources directed to developing lethal weapons must be employed to restore peace, security and justice and a better world in this new millennium.

Mr. Lancry (Israel): At the outset, I would like once again to express my deepest condolences to the people of the United States and to all those affected by the devastating terrorist attacks of 11 September. The Government and the people of Israel, like people all over the world, were shocked and horrified by these tragic events. This is a day that will always live on in our memories, and these memories, to a great extent, must guide our deliberations over the course of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

Allow me to congratulate the Secretary-General on his annual report on the work of the Organization. The report clearly describes the challenges facing the international community in our ever-changing world and outlines the ways in which the Organization can continue to act for the betterment of humanity, based on a commitment to the principles of the Charter.

The report correctly focuses on the overriding theme of globalization and the increased interconnectedness and interdependence of our world. It reflects the recognition that globalization not only affords new opportunities but carries with it new threats and new challenges as well. Neither the problems nor the potential of globalization can be addressed by one nation alone, but, rather, require cooperation among States and international organizations. The United Nations has the potential to serve as the primary forum in which the necessary partnerships can be created to address the challenges that confront all of humanity.

As was horrifyingly demonstrated less than two weeks ago in New York and Washington, D.C., the world faces a grave threat from international terrorism. It must now be clear that terrorism is not confined to a particular region or a particular conflict. The forces that have brought the world's information, transportation and financial networks closer together have also brought the threat of terrorism to everyone's doorstep. This is a threat unlike any the world has ever seen before, and it has the potential to undermine our way of life and the survival of freedom and liberty. The international community must mobilize now to confront this threat, to contain it and, ultimately, to eradicate it.

In this regard, the United Nations has a crucial role to play. Terrorism cannot survive for long without the support of States and leaders in different parts of the world who have vowed to inspire, and even epitomize, the terrorist creed. Terrorists require safe havens in which to escape the rule of law; they require territories in which they can train; and they require financial assistance to fund their operations. These three elements can be provided only by States that either directly support or turn a blind eye to the actions of terrorist groups.

The international community must take the lead in declaring that such behaviour will no longer be tolerated. States that refuse to suppress terrorists that operate in their territory must not be regarded as members in good standing of the family of nations. Those States must be further prevented from assuming leadership roles in international organizations. The United Nations must persevere in the creation of mechanisms with which to identify and take action against States that lend their support to terrorism. Indeed, no challenge is more pressing or more requires concerted international cooperation than the threat of terrorism, and no action more urgently needs our attention.

But the threat of terrorism emerging from certain regions of the world, while a matter of utmost urgency, is far from the only issue with global repercussions. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is a catastrophe of global proportions. It is destroying the social and economic life of the most affected countries, but is by no means limited to those particular countries. While sub-Saharan Africa is the region most severely afflicted, the virus is also spreading at an alarming rate in other parts of the world. As the nature and consequences of the problem are global in scope, so must our response be global. All nations, Governments, international organizations, the private sector and individuals must resolve to unite in a comprehensive worldwide effort to halt the spread of AIDS and to care for those already suffering from it.

In that connection, Israel welcomes the Secretary-General's global call to action as well as the establishment of a High-level Inter-Agency Task Force on HIV/AIDS to coordinate the response of the United Nations to this crisis. We further support the establishment of a Global AIDS and Health Fund to combat AIDS, which will position the United Nations to lead the worldwide effort against the spread of the disease.

Israel strongly supports the Secretary-General's initiative to move the Organization from a culture of reaction to one of conflict prevention. Focusing on preventing conflicts is not simply an exercise in the more efficient allocation of resources — which it most certainly is; it also represents a far more effective method of ridding humanity of the scourge of violence and conflict.

As was made clear in the Secretary-General's report on prevention of armed conflict (A/55/985), primary responsibility for conflict prevention rests with national Governments. The main role of the United Nations should be to support the efforts already under way at the national level. Parties must be encouraged to settle disputes through peaceful means, rather than through violence, in accordance with Article 33 of the United Nations Charter.

To that end, we support the Secretary-General's efforts to foster development and humanitarian projects in troublesome regions, to promote partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations and civil society, and to send multidisciplinary missions to areas of tension before situations spiral out of control.

To increase the effectiveness of such endeavours, the report also deals with modifications of practices within the United Nations system itself. Clearly, a more efficient use of resources, a greater focus on harnessing the power of information technology, and increasing accountability and oversight are all welcome initiatives. In particular, in an organization as vast and diverse as the United Nations, special attention must be directed to facilitating improved communications among departments and agencies, and among United Nations personnel in distant parts of the world. Proper functioning within the United Nations system will vastly improve the ability of the Organization to fulfil its mandate around the globe.

Globalization presents a host of new challenges and new opportunities. The emergence of powerful new tools for communications, for finance and for trade have brought the diverse peoples of the world closer together, provided extraordinary new economic opportunities, and offered the least developed nations a pathway out of poverty. But there are other vicissitudes as well. Globalization can serve to exacerbate inequities, to deepen adverse impact of the digital divide and to benefit some at the expense of others. We must ensure that globalization serves the common good, that it uplifts nations and peoples, and that the increased openness and freedom of our societies does not become the seed of our destruction. In short, we must work together, both within the United Nations and without, to meet the demands of this new world.

Israel is gratified that the recognition of the necessity of international cooperation is continually reinforced throughout the Secretary-General's report. Just as steps are taken to streamline and improve management within the United Nations system, so must we work to improve our collective management of the forces that are reshaping the world. Only by working together can we ensure that globalization conforms to the highest aspirations of humankind.

That is an objective that is far more achievable than it may appear. Globalization is an opportunity to bring diverse peoples together and to foster an appreciation of our differences and a respect for our common values. It is those values that must be strengthened in all our endeavours, as they form the basis of our quest to rid mankind of the scourge of war and to foster peace and coexistence among all the peoples of the world.

Israel remains committed to the United Nations, to the principles upon which it was founded and to its broad agenda in all the varied areas of human endeavour. We are eager to engage in productive partnerships, to foster greater cooperation among Member States and to do our part to realize the noble objectives for which the Organization was established.

Mr. Ouch (Cambodia): At the outset, allow me to express my sincere congratulations to Mr. Han Seung-soo on his unanimous election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. We are confident that under his able guidance the work of this session will be a landmark on the new international scene in terms of facing the new challenges for peace, democracy and progress.

I would take to take this opportunity to reiterate the profound condolences and deepest sympathy which the Royal Government of Cambodia has conveyed to our host country, the United States of America. My delegation condemns strongly those criminal acts of terrorism and supports the inclusion of item 166, entitled "Measures to eliminate international terrorism", on the Assembly's agenda at this session. It is anticipated that this issue will be a great challenge in our debate next week.

I would like to join other speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization contained in document A/56/1. The report gives a concise overview of the activities of the United Nations in the areas of peace and security, humanitarian assistance, development, international law, human rights and the reform of the Organization.

The Secretary-General's report makes reference to the Millennium Declaration, whose main thrust is the war against poverty, which should be all-pervasive and all-encompassing. For developing countries, in particular the least developed countries such as Cambodia, one of the main challenges in that war is how to deal with the irreversible process of globalization. The crucial problem is how we can make globalization work to our advantage and how we can integrate our countries into the ever-accelerating process of globalization so that we will not be left behind and continue to be marginalized. The process of globalization, driven by advances in information and communications technology, the increased mobility of capital, reductions in the barriers of trade and the cost of international transactions, is an unprecedented reality, leaving no country immune or able to escape its impact.

It is clear for all to see that the impact of globalization benefits primarily the States that already have a strong grip on their economies, while leaving the least developed countries, such as Cambodia, with few resources, if any, and little assistance to cope with such a crisis. In the end, the rich countries are getting richer and the poor countries are getting poorer. Therefore, my delegation is of the view that all countries of the world should unite their efforts and resources to make sure that the benefits of globalization are spread more equally among the international community and to minimize the negative impact of this phenomenon, enabling least developed countries to continuously develop and provide the necessary tools in order for their peoples to have better lives in years to come.

In his report, the Secretary-General has also placed emphasis on the disaster caused by HIV/AIDS throughout the world. As one of the countries most seriously affected by the worldwide HIV/AIDS pandemic, Cambodia was very pleased by the adoption of the Declaration of Commitment at the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly on the problem of HIV/AIDS in June 2001, in accordance with resolution 55/13, which, in paragraph 1, called on the General Assembly,

> "as a matter of urgency, to review and address the problem of HIV/AIDS in all its aspects, as well as to secure a global commitment to enhancing coordination and the intensification of national, regional and international efforts to combat it in a comprehensive manner".

However, the largest burden of such efforts must fall to the domestic leadership, which must mobilize all elements of society. The special session has created a global awareness of the problem, which we all should take seriously. Its Declaration of Commitment should be translated into national platforms to combat this problem in all its forms and manifestations.

In regard to conflict prevention and peace-building, the United Nations has been discussing this issue since the early 1990s. As the United Nations seeks to move from a culture of reaction to one of prevention, there is a growing consensus that an effective United Nations prevention strategy requires a concerted multi-actor strategy with a focus on long-term economic and social factors. There is generally a consensus that timely action by the international community to prevent violent conflict can be difficult for a variety of reasons. One is that it is hard to identify situations that are appropriate for preventive action; secondly, mobilizing resources for preventive action is a challenge in the absence of actual violence; and thirdly, external intervention is often not welcomed by potential belligerents.

There have emerged two schools of thought on the future role of the United Nations in the prevention of violent conflicts. One school maintains that the United Nations should continue to play a central role in preventive diplomacy. This could be achieved by strengthening the United Nations, through its Secretary-General, the Department of Political Affairs, key partners within the United Nations system and a greater willingness of the Security Council to act preventively. The other school would argue that the responsibility for prevention should devolve to regional organizations and other actors. Cambodia's experience seems to point to the second alternative as the more plausible course to follow.

Of course, the proliferation of small arms is conducive to conflict and fighting, but the root cause of the problem is not small arms, which can be supplied by eager traffickers anytime and anywhere when the fertile ground of potential conflict is there. Just as we treat a sick person, we should combat this illness with drugs and, sometimes, with surgery. However, to prevent illness, that person should do regular exercise and generally follow a lifestyle that is conducive to good health and to building up his or her resistance against illness. Likewise, conflict prevention should not only mean preventive diplomacy and peacemaking after conflict, but should also address structural conflict prevention, which deals with the underlying causes of conflict, such as the lack of democracy, human rights and economic and social development. Thus, we should not focus only on providing United Nations resources for preventive action. We should look upon the collective efforts of peace-building by the entire United Nations family and other actors to develop the country, which should also be categorized as building a culture of prevention.

In conclusion, allow me to join other representatives in expressing my sincere congratulations to Mr. Kofi Annan on his re-election to the post of Secretary-General. His long and extensive experience in the United Nations has afforded him a deep insight into the challenges that the United Nations has faced. I am convinced that, with his humble skills, commitment and his outstanding vision and leadership, Mr. Kofi Annan will be able to accomplish his noble mission successfully.

Mr. Swe (Myanmar): I wish, first of all, to express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization. I wish also to congratulate him on his election for a second term.

His report has been rendered more relevant by the tragic events of 11 September and the heinous act of terrorism that not only affects our host city and country, but has also seriously impacted the work of our Organization. We therefore welcome the decision to discuss, on 1 October in the plenary, measures to eliminate terrorism. Myanmar would like to put on record that we oppose terrorism in all forms and manifestations.

The Secretary-General's report underlines the importance of strengthening our Organization's role in safeguarding peace and security and the need to strengthen its capacity to adjust to changing international circumstances. He terms this the "tradition of innovation".

The United Nations is the universal Organization based on state sovereignty. I therefore fully agree with the Secretary-General that, in preserving this tradition of innovation, the principles of the Charter must be maintained. As we look to the future to meet the new challenges, the Charter's principles must form the bedrock of our Organization.

In our search for peace and security, arms control and disarmament are of critical importance. The Secretary-General's report has again underscored the fact that in the Millennium Declaration the world's leaders committed themselves to the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. Myanmar therefore shares the disappointment expressed in the report regarding the low level of international cooperation in disarmament, particularly at the Conference on Disarmament. Myanmar looks forward to the commencement of negotiations on disarmament on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator and the mandate entrusted to him.

We once again call upon the Conference on Disarmament to establish on a priority basis an ad hoc committee to deal with nuclear disarmament and to commence negotiations for a phased programme of nuclear disarmament leading to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. In that regard, the convening at an early date of an international conference on disarmament in all its respects would enable us to identify and deal with concrete measures to achieve nuclear disarmament.

Let me now turn to another issue, an issue of critical importance to the international community. This is the HIV/AIDS pandemic, to which the Secretary-General paid personal attention through his recent initiative. The recently concluded twenty-sixth special session, on HIV/AIDS, underscored the need for a global effort to combat the disease. The international community has confirmed its commitment to intensify efforts nationally, regionally and internationally.

Myanmar is also fully aware of the tremendous toll that the disease could exact, not only on the people affected but also on society as a whole. HIV/AIDS has therefore been designated as a disease of national concern in Myanmar, and, accordingly, we are committed to using all available resources to combat it. We will also continue to cooperate with national, regional and international partners on this matter.

Let me now turn to another issue of importance highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General: sustainable development. The Secretary-General reports that despite the efforts of Governments in both developed and developing countries, of the United Nations system and of the private sector, the challenge of achieving sustainability remains to be met. Myanmar views sustainable development as the harmonious integration of a sound and viable economy, responsible governance, social cohesion and harmony and ecological integrity to ensure that development is a life-enhancing process. At the national level we have devoted considerable energy and resources in the implementation of Myanmar Agenda 21. National action, as well as regional and international action, is indispensable in addressing the challenge of achieving sustainable development. We therefore look forward to cooperating with the international community at the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held at Johannesburg in 2002.

Another, equally important, international conference is to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002. That is the International Conference on Financing for Development. That Conference will give us an opportunity to address the issue of economic development in a comprehensive and holistic manner. It will be the first time that trade, finance and development authorities will have a chance to sit down together to find ways and means to address development issues in all their aspects. We hope that the Conference will result in concrete, substantial and meaningful outcomes.

Mr. Loizaga (Paraguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the report he has submitted to us on the work of the Organization in document A/56/1, which offers a framework for reference and discussion on the broad agenda being carried out by the United Nations. The report is a clear sign that the United Nations, and the Secretary-General in particular, are moving forward with the mandate given to them by the Member States. That is why I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate to Mr. Kofi Annan the complete satisfaction of the

Government of the Republic of Paraguay at his election to a second mandate. We are convinced that with his leadership he will bring the United Nations closer to the peoples and adapt the Organization to new and important challenges and to the new reality imposed on it today by international politics and events.

In paragraph 4 of his report, the Secretary-General states:

> "During the past year, we have witnessed striking contrasts on the international scene, both encouraging developments and dangerous threats."

Who could have imagined that this reflection would have materialized in the tragic events of 11 September, to which we were eyewitnesses? The Government of the Republic of Paraguay believes that the cowardly terrorist acts perpetrated against the United States of America are also an attack on the free, democratic, civilized and peace-loving world. As the Secretary-General has correctly said, those attacks were not only attacks against New York and the United States; they were attacks against the entire world. Therefore we must remain united in our struggle against terrorism in all its forms.

These horrible events have given a distinctive turn to what we thought at the beginning of the twenty-first century. For this reason the community of nations must assume a resolute and firm commitment in favour of international peace and progress so as to preserve for future generations a legacy of democracy, peace and security, as established by the Charter of the United Nations.

Next week in this very Hall, Member States will have an opportunity to debate agenda item 166, entitled "Measures to eliminate international terrorism". My delegation welcomes the decision to do so and stands ready to participate actively in the discussions. We also wish to pledge our wholehearted and decisive support so that the Organization may play its proper role firmly, energetically and unequivocally with regard to this issue.

The areas covered by the report are certainly very important, but, given the time allotted to us, we shall focus on a few elements we consider to be priorities for our country.

The implementation of the goals set out in the Millennium Declaration and the other commitments undertaken in other forums of the Organization in the context of development is still among the greatest and most urgent challenges to be met in the years to come.

In this connection, two important meetings will take place next year. The International Conference on Financing for Development, which is to be held in Monterrey, Mexico, will offer an unprecedented opportunity to collectively examine with all the actors involved the issue of mobilizing development resources and using them effectively. Likewise, the Rio+10 Summit, which is to be held in Johannesburg, will give the international community an opportunity to examine all aspects of sustainable development in a comprehensive manner.

We are pleased with the fact that the report devotes a section to the situation of least developed countries and to the important conference held in Brussels in May of this year. Nevertheless, we believe that the report should have made some mention of the situation of landlocked countries and small island developing States. Due to their physical and geographic circumstances, which hamper their development, these are the most disadvantaged countries among developing States. They therefore run a greater risk of being marginalized and of not having the same access to the benefits of globalization as other developing countries.

We fully agree with the Secretary-General — and with most of the speakers that have spoken before me — that the eradication of poverty is the most difficult battle facing the Organization and the international community. That was clearly and firmly highlighted at the highest level during the Millennium Summit. Globalization must be the instrument that enables all nations to develop within an inclusive and equitable framework so that all may benefit from its many advantages.

We also agree with the Secretary-General that we must accelerate the economic growth of developing countries to eradicate poverty. But how can that be done? How are we going to achieve economic development — and therefore overcome poverty — if developing countries, and landlocked countries in particular, are at a greater disadvantage with regard to international trade and are more isolated from global markets.

As everyone knows, one of the most serious problems faced by landlocked countries is the cost of transportation. It is also well known that this is a decisive factor in the foreign trade of any country, and that it has a serious impact on the possibility of expanding trade and, as a result, of achieving more accelerated economic development. Until developed countries and other developing countries open their markets to the goods and commodities of poor countries, lift their non-tariff measures and dismantle their farming subsidies, no effort to reduce poverty will be successful and we will not be able to reach the goals set in the Millennium Declaration.

That fact was emphasized by the special high-level meeting of the Economic and Social Council with the Bretton Woods institutions — which took place in May of this year and which is also mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General. At the same meeting it was also acknowledged that the trade protectionism practised by developed countries, particularly that in the agricultural sector, prevent developing countries from fully benefiting from trade. Developing countries must have fair access to markets in order to benefit equally from the multilateral trading system.

My delegation believes that one of the most striking developments of the past year was the submission by the Secretary-General of the report on the prevention of armed conflict. We fully agree with him that early prevention of armed conflict forces us to look at the deep-rooted and structural causes of crises. Regrettably, we see that this has not received the same consideration and analysis from Member States that the Brahimi report did. We feel that we should begin an exhaustive study of the report as soon as possible and review its recommendations in order to move from a culture of reaction to one of prevention.

We also reiterate the importance of promptly establishing the International Criminal Court, especially at this time. Paraguay ratified the Rome Statute as a sign of its commitment to justice, peace and international law. We await its entry into force.

This year's report also reflects the United Nations efforts in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The holding of the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS — whose purpose was to examine all aspects of the problem for the first time at the highest level — and the results achieved by it, are to be commended. In this connection, we reiterate our support for the proposal to establish a global fund against AIDS to support in particular the countries most affected and having the greatest need.

Finally, I would like to reiterate our thanks to the Secretary-General for the report under consideration, as that report will be a useful instrument in the work to be done in the future in the various areas of activity of the Organization.

Mr. Naidu (Fiji): My Government highly commends the incisive report of the Secretary-General. However, Fiji laments the fact that its charismatic impact has been severely overtaken by the cold-blooded, vicious terrorist attacks that took place two weeks ago in our host country — although it helps us perhaps to understand some of the context of those attacks. Nonetheless, we congratulate the Secretary-General for his many tireless efforts, which are candidly summarized in this report.

There are many lessons to be learned from our varying experiences of horror and anger due to the recent tragedies. There are also a good number of insightful thoughts and narratives in the Secretary-General's report. The reflections of my delegation will refer primarily to the numerous efforts to maintain international security and peace. Most important among those is the new cultural direction envisaged by the report. It is a timely shift, which the Secretary-General now wishes to reinforce, for the United Nations to move from a culture of reaction to one of prevention. Although this vision preceded the deplorable terrorist attacks, the attacks more than underscore the urgency of undertaking preventive diplomacy in the complexities of modern political interactions.

Fiji has in the past drawn on its extensive experience in peacekeeping. We have increasingly spoken of the value of maintaining peace in preventing a situation from building into conflict when the need for peacekeeping becomes imminent. Peace maintenance should be our prior goal, failing which, peacekeeping, in the planned reforms, should be reoriented and re-equipped to lay the groundwork for more profound and lasting peace-building. Our position resonates well with the view of the President of the Security Council in February, that a well-planned peace-building strategy has a positive role in conflict prevention.

We echo the Secretary-General's sentiments about the increasing role that Member States and regional and subregional organizations can play, in partnership with the United Nations, in peace-building, peacekeeping and peacemaking. Close cooperation between the United Nations and relevant regional organizations has so far yielded productive results towards that goal. Fiji is confident that similar progress stands to be gained in cooperation between the United Nations and the Pacific Islands Forum, which will be discussed under a new agenda item at the fifty-sixth session.

The report correctly reflects the prevailing winds of peace blowing in our Asia-Pacific region. Amicable relations and perseverance between the respective parties have brought about a peaceful settlement in Bougainville. Likewise, we endorse the Secretary-General's earnest plea to administering agencies to seek peaceful resolutions to their troubled respective territories, and his view that the best solutions for these can be found from within each State, in the democratic norms and human rights framework to which all Member States adhere. In our region, we will continue to support United Nations efforts to assist in ongoing democratic reforms, as indeed we have in East Timor. We look forward to continuing progress in the reform process and to witnessing its positive impact on the remaining territories that are identified in the report.

The report continues to remind us that the greatest losers in any conflict are commonly the innocent, helpless victims who are ordinarily vulnerable and who fare the worst in conflict situation. Women, children, the aged and the disabled form a sizeable portion of any population, easily fall prey to battles between warring parties and are often defenceless.

We applaud the inroads being made by the women's lobby in the area of international peace and security. The gender perspective they have added to the world view of conflict is a positive dimension that is now triggering cultural change. We celebrate that positive change, which is taking place in our lifetime and only one year since the Security Council debate on that subject, the subsequent conference and the adoption of a resolution.

We cannot agree more about the need for sustained peacekeeping in Africa in the foreseeable future. Again, Fiji reiterates its willingness to commit its peacekeeping resources and to apply the skills and experience it has gained from numerous United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The report properly reflects on the scale of the sizeable humanitarian operations that directly result from conflicts or civil unrest. The direct correlation between the two is getting out of control in some areas, and continues to escalate. Cultivating a culture of conflict prevention and of peace is an ideal way to address some of these difficult questions. This renewed vision may increasingly see the delivery of peacekeeping and of humanitarian services in tandem, as opposed to their being discrete and independent of each other.

Again, our congratulations go to the Secretary-General on the hard work of the past year and on the resulting comprehensive report.

Mr. Fruchtbaum (Grenada): Once again the Secretary-General and his associates have performed the miracle of preparing their report on the work of the Organization (A/56/1). It is a document that reviews the recent past, illuminates the present and indicates the issues that are well on the way to becoming crucial in the near future. In paragraph 5, for example, the Secretary-General observes that

> "universal ideas — the sovereignty of the people, accountability of leaders, individual rights, and the rule of law — are spreading around the world".

Some of the implications of that for our work here have long been apparent, but an idea such as the sovereignty of the people will require us and those who come after us to think in new directions.

Recent events underscore the importance of one of the major themes of the report: the rule of law in international affairs. In paragraph 9, the Secretary-General states that

> "The quest of the United Nations to build a world of order and justice can be achieved only through respect for the rule of law in international affairs. The growth of international law, the ratification of international treaties, and the prosecution of war criminals by international tribunals will help to ensure that ruthless force does not prevail."

My delegation read with considerable interest the section on "Enhancing the rule of law" beginning with paragraph 216. The Secretary-General observes in paragraph 219 that

> "Many States fail to sign or ratify treaties, not because of any lack of political will, but because of a simple shortage of technical expertise when it comes to the implementation of treaty provisions."

For my delegation, the efforts of the Office of Legal Affairs, in cooperation with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, to address this problem are welcome indeed. The demands of the reporting obligations of treaties, however, will remain for a significant number of States a serious difficulty that will require assistance to overcome.

My delegation wholeheartedly agrees with the Secretary-General when he writes this in paragraph 221: "That the law should be accessible to those whom it is meant to guide is a central precept of the rule of law", and we note with satisfaction the undertaking by the Office of Legal Affairs to make available on the Internet the complete texts of the over 50,000 treaties that were registered with the Secretariat before May 1998.

As useful as this will be to those with an interest in international law, an even greater effort is required. The United Nations system, working in cooperation with Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, must mobilize the necessary resources to create a long-term programme designed to make an introduction to the basic concepts and principles of international law and international humanitarian law a fundamental part of every young person's education. Without such an undertaking, our quest, to quote the Secretary-General, "to build a world of order and justice ... through respect for the rule of law in international affairs" (*A/56/1, para. 9*) is unlikely to succeed. We will have more to say about this proposal in other forums.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item. May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization?

It was so decided.

The Acting President: We have concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 10.

The meeting rose at 12. 45 p.m.